The 3rd and 4th Books of Maccabees

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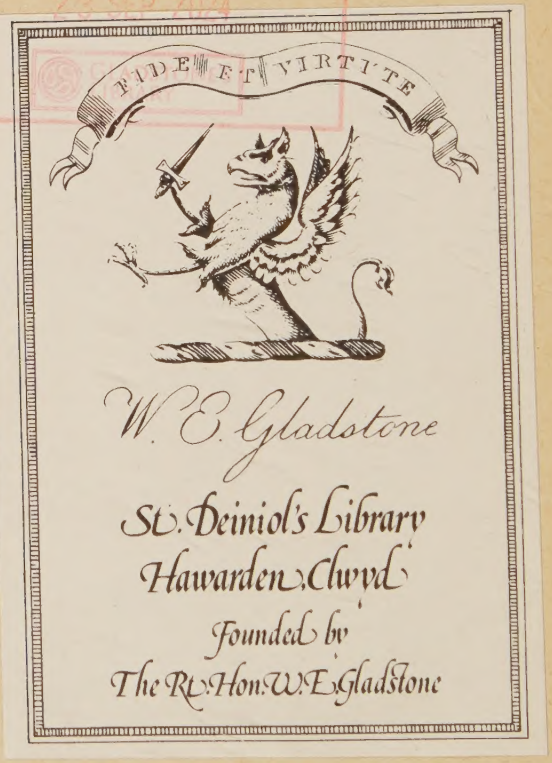

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TRANSLATIONS OF EARLY DOCUMENTS

SERIES II

HELLENISTIC-JEWISH TEXTS

THE THIRD BOOK OF MACCABEES

THE THIRD BOOK OF MACCABEES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Contents of the Book.

Since the story of 3 Maccabees is at once unfamiliar and somewhat complicated, an outline may be useful. The book opens with an account of the battle of Raphia, fought between Ptolemy IV., Philopator, and Antiochus III., the Great, in 217 B.C. Ptolemy after his victory proceeds to visit Jerusalem, insisting in spite of protests on entering the Holy Place (i. 6–29). Simon, the High-Priest, prays that the desecration may be prevented (ii. 1–20), and Ptolemy is punished by a divine intervention, barely escaping with his life (21–24). On his return to Egypt he issues a decree in revenge, depriving the Jews of Alexandria of their citizenship unless they attach themselves to the worship of Dionysus (25–33). He then proceeds to order that all Jews in his dominions shall be sent as prisoners to Alexandria (Ch. III.). Chapter IV. describes their cruel treatment and the execution of the decree. The king orders that on the following day they shall all be trampled to death by infuriated elephants, but forgets all about his purpose, so that the massacre is postponed to the next day (v. 1–22). Once more he changes his mind, but on the third occasion the order is finally on the point of being executed (23–51). Eleazar, an aged priest,

prays to God, and two angels are sent from heaven, who terrify the king and his hosts and turn the elephants against their keepers (vi. 1–21). The king then becomes the protector of the Jews, and grants them a seven days' feast in celebration of their deliverance (22–41); he writes a letter vindicating their loyalty (vii. 1–9), and gives them permission to return to their homes and take vengeance on apostates (10–23).

Purpose of the Book.

The primary interest of the book lies in the fact that it is an example of one type of apology put forth by Jewish writers in defence of their religion and independence. As soon as Judaism came into contact with the Graeco-Roman world it tended to become unpopular by reason of its exclusiveness and peculiarities; we see in iii. 4 the kind of charges brought against it. Various methods of apology were open. The best was the appeal to reason, which might convince the outsider of the legitimacy, if not of the superiority, of the Jewish position. The *Letter of Aristeas*, 4 Maccabees, and the writings of Philo are examples of this method. Another line was the appeal to history and facts. This included the argument, which found its counterpart among the early apologists for Christianity, that after all members of the suspected religion make good and loyal citizens; 3 Maccabees emphasizes this point (iii. 5, vii. 7, 20). But still more obviously attractive was the warning that in spite of the apparent defencelessness of the Jews it was dangerous to interfere with them, since they had a supernatural ally who was ready to avenge their oppressors. The main stress in 3 Mac-

cabees lies on this side, and the king is represented as explicitly recognizing the lesson (vii. 6). Daniel, Esther, and Judith are other examples of this type of apology. In the last two books, though the story is improbable enough, it keeps within the limits of the natural. This cannot be said of 3 Maccabees, which turns not only on improbabilities, but on direct miraculous interventions (ii. 21 ff., v. 11, 28, vi. 18 ff.).

The book besides being a warning to the outsider is also directed against heretics and backsliders within the nation. In itself it represents a strictly nationalistic and conservative type of Judaism, sharply distinguished from all the post-exilic developments and accretions with which we are familiar in other literature of this period. There are no intermediaries between God and man; "providence" is mentioned but not personified. Demons and angels do not appear except in the miraculous intervention of vi. 18,[1] and here the angelic appearance is treated with a curious reserve, being invisible to the Jews themselves. There is no reference to the Messiah, the Messianic age, or the future life. Proselytes are not desired; Ptolemy does not appear in any way as a convert. The sanctity and beauty of the Temple, representing the orthodox religion, are strongly insisted on, and lessons of encouragement are drawn exclusively from the national history. And so punishment falls on backsliders, especially on those who showed any tendency to compromise with Hellenism, a problem which became very urgent in the second century B.C. No heresy-hunter could

[1] The repulse of Sennacherib, in vi. 5, is ascribed to God Himself, not to the "angel of the Lord," as in 2 Kings xix. 35.

have found any fault with the uncompromising orthodoxy of the book.

It may be added that the stress laid upon the Feasts observed in memory of the deliverance of the Jews (vi. 36 ff., vii. 19) suggests that the book may have been written in order to commend the keeping of these Feasts and to be read at them every year. In that case it falls into line with Esther and 2 and 4 Maccabees. See Introd. to 4 Maccabees, p. xii.

Date and Origin.

There are obvious points of contact between this book and 2 Maccabees. Many of the leading ideas and incidents are the same: The repulse of Heliodorus (2 Macc. iii. 22–31), and the punishment of Antiochus (ix. 4 ff.; cf. 3 Macc. ii. 21–24); miraculous visions (iii. 25, x. 29, xi. 8; cf. 3 Macc. vi. 18); stress on the sanctity of the Temple and prayers for its defence (iii. 15–22, viii. 2–4, xiv. 34–36; cf. 3 Macc. i. 11 ff., ii. 1 ff.); attacks on religion (vi. 9, etc.; cf. 3 Macc. ii. 27 ff., iii. 21; attempts to enforce an alien citizenship (iv. 9; cf. 3 Macc. *ib.*); stress laid on memorial feasts (x. 6, xv. 36; cf. 3 Macc. vi. 30–36). An aged and pious Eleazar appears in both books (vi. 18; cf. 3 Macc. vi. 1); official letters are included (ix. 18 ff., xi. 16 ff.; cf. 3 Macc. iii. 12 ff., vii. 1 ff.); the picture of the general horror in iii. 15 ff. is like that in 3 Macc. i. 16 ff., iv. 3–8.

The resemblances extend also to style and language, though the style of 2 Maccabees is far less involved and exaggerated. Again, there are similar points of connexion both in purpose and idea, and also in vocabulary, with the *Letter of*

Aristeas. And lastly, a comparison of the official and technical language, especially in the king's letters and decrees, shows a rather striking agreement with data afforded by the papyri of the Ptolemaic period.[1] There is not sufficient evidence to justify us in assuming any direct connexion either with 2 Maccabees or the *Letter of Aristeas*, but the resemblances do suggest that our book belongs to the same school and period. We may therefore date it *c.* 100 B.C., and connect it with Alexandria, though, as has already been pointed out, there are no traces of the distinctive Alexandrian theology. It may be noted that this was the period when Jewish apologetic literature was most in vogue, and it is interesting to find an example of it which shows no inclination to compromise in any direction with the surrounding Hellenism. The author is quite unknown.

Of alternative dates the most important is that assigned to the book by Ewald, who connects it with the attempt of Caligula to place his image in the Temple, and with the persecutions of the Alexandrian Jews which took place in his reign (see Philo, *adv. Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Caium*). But the parallels are not really close, and the characteristic features of the Caligula story are absent, while the tone of 3 Maccabees points to a period of triumph and prosperity. On the other hand, the positive indications, derived from language and the literary resemblances, all combine to point to the earlier date.

[1] For evidence of the conclusions stated in this and the following sections reference may be made to the writer's edition of 3 Maccabees in Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. i., where full lists of words and details are given.

Historical Basis.

(*a*) *Relation to Polybius.*—While the account of the battle of Raphia agrees generally with the narrative of Polybius v., there are numerous differences for which there is no obvious reason (see notes on ch. i.). Can these be traced to any special source or authority? The present writer believes that there is good reason to suppose that they are derived from the Memoirs of Ptolemy Megalopolitanus, who wrote an account of the reign of Philopator, by no means favourable to the king. This account seems to have been sometimes used by Polybius, and it is probable that it also lies at the back of 3 Maccabees. The variations already referred to in the story of the battle of Raphia, the rather detailed and very unflattering picture of the court of the king, and the conception of his vacillating character, may all come from Megalopolitanus. Amongst the stories told by him there may well have been some which a pious Jew could adapt to the glorification of his nation.

(*b*) *Relation to Josephus.*—In *c. Ap.* ii. 5 Josephus has in close connexion two stories which correspond to the two main themes of 3 Maccabees. He speaks of a visit made to Jerusalem by Euergetes I. to return thanks for his successes. He then goes on to narrate how after the death of Philometor the Jews of Alexandria supported Cleopatra against her brother Physcon (Ptolemy IX., 146–117). The latter on his accession exposed the Jews and their families to drunken elephants, which turned on his followers and slew many of them. A phantom also appeared to the king, which "prohibited his hurting" them.

There is clearly some connexion between the two stories, and Josephus's version is the more probable, both in the motive assigned for the attempted massacre and in the general absence of miraculous embellishments. It has, however, been suggested by Mahaffy and others that Josephus was wrong in placing the incident in the reign of Physcon, on the ground that, according to the evidence of papyri, he treated the Jews well. This evidence, however, refers to the latter part of his reign, and Josephus himself implies that he finally became a protector of the Jews, so that there is no real contradiction. It is therefore probable that the writer of 3 Maccabees (of course using some earlier source than Josephus) deliberately transferred the incident to an earlier reign. He had an obvious reason for doing so. In the story as told by Josephus, the Jews, though preserved and vindicated, did in fact take the losing, and therefore the wrong, side. For his purpose it was better to place the whole incident in a more distant setting, where it would be possible to exhibit them as altogether blameless. Visits to Jerusalem may well have been made both by Philopator and by Euergetes. Such a visit is at any rate quite in place in the reign of the former. He was interested both in religion and in architecture, and in his triumphal progress after the battle of Raphia it is not likely that he should have omitted the Jewish capital. The story of 3 Maccabees at this point may in fact have been derived in substance from the Memoirs of Megalopolitanus.

The aim and the method of the writer seem then to have been to combine in a single picture as many features as possible, all tending to the glorification of the Jewish nation. We have

the frustrated attempt to enter the Temple, with the emphasis laid on its beauty and sanctity, the miraculous preservation of the Jews, with the warning of the danger of attempting to interfere with them and the testimony paid to their loyalty, and finally the denunciation and punishment of renegades and Hellenizers. Subordinately there is the reference in i. 3 to the saving of the king's life by Dositheus, a Jew, though strangely enough he is admitted to be a renegade. The picture is very confused; details and the sequence of events are often unconvincing and there are gross exaggerations (*e.g.* iv. 3, 14 ff., 18), but taken separately there may well be a core of historic fact in each one of the incidents.

On this view it becomes unnecessary to suppose with some critics that the book has been drastically edited, and contains interpolations. The inconsistencies and contradictions, such as the reference in ii. 25 to the companions "already mentioned," when in fact they have not been spoken of previously, are simply due to the writer's careless use of the various sources from which he has drawn his stories. The same holds good of the abruptness of the opening; it is not probable that the true beginning has been lost.

Style.

The style is rhetorical and bombastic to a degree; the sentences are full of repetitions and awkwardly constructed, with a marked absence of connecting particles. The vocabulary shows a fondness for rare or unique compounds and poetical words, and the result is very artificial, the numerous purple passages quite failing to convince. In a word, the book is a specimen of the worst kind of

pseudo-classicalism, a sort of Baboo Greek, such as was not uncommon in the Hellenistic period. In the translation which follows no attempt has been made to conceal these features; a smoother and more literary rendering would have given a quite false impression of the book.

Text and Title.

The text, which is on the whole well preserved, is found in A. and V., and in many cursives of the LXX. There is a free and extended version in the Syriac Peshitto, and also a loose, but literary, Armenian translation. The book is not in the Vulgate, and does not appear in the Roman or English Apocrypha. There are very few early quotations from it, and these are confined to Christian writers of the Eastern Church.

There is no obvious reason for the title *Maccabees*, and it may simply have arisen from its collocation with the other Maccabean books in the MSS. They may have been grouped together as dealing with the origin of Feasts (see above, p. viii). There is some trace of a title *Ptolemaica*, which would be more accurate.

Bibliography.

The Greek text is accessible in editions of the Septuagint, *e. g.* Swete, *O. T. in Greek*, vol. iii. There is an English translation in Churton, *Uncanonical and Apocryphal Scriptures* (1884). Of German editions reference may be made to Grimm, *Handbuch zu den Apokryphen* (1857)—far the fullest — and Kautzsch, *Apokr. u. Pseudepigr.* (1899). Critical inquiries in Schürer, *G. J. V.* (1909) ii., iii.,

pp. 493 ff. [Eng. trans. ii., iii., pp. 216 ff.]; Swete, *Intr. O. T. in Greek* (1902), pp. 278 ff.; Abrahams, *J. Q. R.*, ix., pp. 39 ff.; Mahaffy, *Empire of the Ptolemies*, pp. 267 ff., and *Ptolemaic Dynasty* (vol. iv. of Petrie's *Hist. Egypt*), chs. v., viii.; Büchler, *Tobiaden und Oniaden*, pp. 172 ff.

The most recent edition is that by the present writer in Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913), vol. i., pp. 155–173, to which, as has already been said, reference may be made for full evidence of positions taken up in this Introduction and the following notes. The translation is reproduced by kind permission of the Oxford University Press.

Words inserted in the translation for the sake of clearness are printed in italics.

THE THIRD BOOK OF MACCABEES

I. 1–8. **The Battle of Raphia.**

1. Now when Philopator had learned from those who had returned of the capture by Antiochus of the places which had been held by him, he issued orders to all his forces, foot and horse, and taking with him his sister Arsinoe, marched to the district over against Raphia, where the army of Antiochus

I. 1. Philopator, *i. e.* Ptolemy IV. (222–204 B.C.). Justinus says of him "noctes in stupris, dies in conviviis consumit," a character which agrees completely with the picture given of him in this book. He therefore caused great astonishment when he suddenly asserted himself and recovered Palestine from his formidable rival Antiochus III. the Great (224–187), by the victory of Raphia (217 B.C.). The book opens with a brief account of the battle, which is in general agreement with the account given by Polybius (v. 40 ff. ; 82 ff.). According to the latter the armies reach Raphia at the same time, and Arsinoe's encouragement comes before the battle ; at the crisis it is the king himself who changes the fortune of the day. As has been pointed out in the Introduction, these variants are probably derived from the lost Memoirs of Ptolemy Megalopolitanus. The abruptness of the opening and the details of the first few verses can indeed only be explained by supposing that the writer was following some such source, since they have nothing to do with the rest of the book.

"His sister Arsinoe." This is correct at the date of the battle; later, following the Egyptian custom, she became Ptolemy's wife.

The battle of Raphia is referred to in Dan. xi. 11, 12.

was encamped. 2. But a certain Theodotus, determining to carry out his plot, took with him the bravest of the soldiers of Ptolemy who had been previously assigned to him, and went by night to the tent of Ptolemy, intending to kill him single-handed, and thereby put an end to the war. 3. But Dositheus, called the son of Drimylus, who was by birth a Jew, but had subsequently abandoned *the observance of* the law, and renounced his ancestral faith, had conveyed Ptolemy away, and put some obscure person to sleep in the tent; and so it happened that on this man fell the vengeance intended for the other. 4. And when a fierce battle had begun, and things were favouring Antiochus, Arsinoe went frequently up and down the ranks, and, her hair dishevelled, exhorted them with lamentation and tears to fight manfully for themselves, their children, and their wives, promising to give them if they conquered two minae of gold each. 5. And thus it came about that their adversaries were destroyed in the encounter, and that many were also taken captive. 6. So Ptolemy,

2. This attempt of Theodotus is narrated by Polybius (v. 81), and once more there are minor differences. In particular Dositheus is not mentioned by Polybius. The saving of the king's life by the loyalty of a Jew is in keeping with the writer's main purpose (Intr. p. vi). In view of his hostility to renegades it is strange that Dositheus should be so described. Either the fact was mentioned in the source, or he regarded any one employed in a pagan court as so far an apostate. It may be noticed that a Dositheus is mentioned in Jos., *c. Ap.* ii. 5, as a Jewish general who did good service to the Ptolemies (see Intr. p. xii). In *Ap. and Pseud. of O.T.*, i. p. 160, details will be found of others of the same name who played similar parts, and of possible identifications.

6. Polybius refers to the ready submission of the cities of Coele-Syria and to Ptolemy's visits, laying stress on their gifts to him.

having crushed the attack, determined to visit the neighbouring cities, and encourage them. 7. And having done this, and given gifts to their shrines, he inspired his subjects with confidence. 8. And when the Jews had sent to him some of the senate and elders to greet him, and bring him gifts, and congratulate him on what had happened, he became the more eager to visit them as quickly as possible.

9–29. **Philopator attempts to enter the Holy Place.**

9. And when he had come to Jerusalem he sacrificed to the Most High God and offered thank-offerings, acting in some measure according to what was suitable to the place. And entering into the holy place, and being struck by the care *displayed*, and the beauty, 10. and admiring also the good order of the temple, it came into his mind to purpose to enter into the sanctuary. 11. And when they said that this was not allowed, since not even members of their own nation could enter, or all the priests, but only the High-Priest who was chief of all, and he once a year, he was by no means convinced. 12. And when the law had been read out to him, not even then did he desist from his claim that he himself should enter, saying, Even if they are deprived of this honour, I must not be so. 13. And he asked why, when he entered into every shrine, none of those present hindered him? 14. And some one answered thoughtlessly that he did wrong to make this boast. 15. But since this is so, he said, why should I not enter in any case, whether they wish it or not? 16. Then

15. The general meaning is clear, though the text and translation are doubtful.

the priests in all their robes fell down, and besought the Most High God to aid them in that which had come upon them, and to turn the violence of him who was making this wicked attack, filling the temple with lamentation and tears; 17. and those who were left in the city hurried forth in confusion, concluding that something strange was happening. 18. The virgins who had been shut up in their chambers rushed forth with their mothers, and, covering their hair with dust and ashes, filled the streets with groanings and lamentations. 19. And those who had been lately married, leaving the chambers prepared for wedded intercourse and forgetting their proper modesty, ran about in confusion through the city. 20. And as for the newborn children, the mothers and nurses who had charge of them, left them here and there, in the houses or in the streets without care, and came in crowds to the temple which is high above all. 21. And manifold were the supplications of those gathered here because of the impious enterprise of the king. 22. And with them the bolder from among the citizens would not endure his carrying the matter to an extremity, or his determination to complete his project; 23. but calling *on one another* to rush to arms, and to die bravely for the law of their fathers, they made great confusion in the place, and being with difficulty turned from their purpose by the elders and the priests they joined in supplication with them. 24. And the multitude continued meanwhile praying as before. 25. But the elders who were with the king tried in many ways to turn his haughty mind from the purpose he had conceived. 26. But being

18, 19. The text is in some confusion. For the general picture cf. 2 Macc. iii. 19.

emboldened and now setting them all aside, he was even beginning to approach, thinking that he would complete the *design* aforesaid. 27. Therefore those who were with him, seeing this, joined with our own people in beseeching him who has all power to defend them in their present need, and not to disregard the lawless and insolent deed. 28. So incessant and vehement was the united cry of the multitude that an indescribable uproar arose. 29. For it might have been thought that not only the people, but even the walls and the whole pavement were crying out, since all preferred death to the profanation of the *holy* place.

II. 1–20. **Prayer of Simon.**

1. Then the High-Priest Simon, bowing his knees before the holy place, and spreading out his hands in calm reverence, prayed after this manner: 2. Lord, Lord, King of the heavens, and sovereign of all creation, holy among the holy ones, only ruler, almighty, give ear to us who are grievously troubled by one wicked and profane, made wanton in insolence and might. 3. For thou, who hast created all things, and governest the whole world, art a righteous ruler, and judgest those who do aught in violence and arrogance.

II. 1. Simon II., son of Onias I., High-Priest 219–199 B.C. The whole verse is absent from the best Greek MSS., so that there is some doubt as to whether he was originally mentioned here.

2. "Holy among the holy ones" occurs in combination with Isa. lvii. 15 in the Liturgy of St. Clement. The long string of attributes of God was a characteristic feature of the prayers of Hellenistic Judaism, cf. ii. 21, v. 7, vi. 2–9, 18, 28; 2 Macc. i. 24; Pr. Man. 1–4.

4. Thou didst destroy those who aforetime did iniquity, among whom were giants trusting in their strength and boldness, bringing upon them a boundless flood of water. 5. Thou didst burn up with fire and brimstone the men of Sodom, workers of arrogance, who had become known of all for their crimes, and didst make them an example to those who should come after. 6. Thou didst try with manifold and grievous punishments the insolent Pharaoh when he enslaved thy holy people Israel, and didst make known thy mighty power. 7. And when he pursued with chariots and a multitude of peoples thou didst overwhelm him in the depth of the sea, but those who trusted in thee, the ruler of all creation, thou didst bring safely through. 8. And they seeing the works of thy hands did praise thee, the almighty. 9. Thou, O King, when thou didst create the boundless and measureless earth, didst choose this city and sanctify this place [for thy name] for thyself, who hast need of nothing, and didst glorify it by a splendid manifestation, establishing it to the glory of thy great and honourable name. 10. And loving the house of Israel, thou didst promise that if there should be a falling away, and distress should overtake us, and we should come to this place and make our supplication, thou wouldest hear our prayer. 11. And indeed thou art faithful and true. 12. And seeing that oftentimes when our fathers were afflicted thou didst succour them in their humiliation, and didst deliver them from

4. Refs. to the Giants are frequent, especially in the Apocalyptic Literature, but see also Sir. xvi. 7, Wisd. xiv. 6, Judith xvi. 7. In 2 Pet. ii. 5–6 we have the angels, the flood, and Sodom.

10. 1 Kings viii. 33.

great evils, 13, behold now, O holy King, for our many great sins we are grievously troubled and put into subjection to our foes, and faint in *our* weakness. 14. In our low estate this insolent and profane man seeketh to do violence to the holy place which is consecrated upon earth to the name of thy glory. 15. For man cannot reach thy dwelling place, the heaven of heavens. 16. But since thy good pleasure was in thy glory amongst thy people Israel, thou didst hallow this place. 17. Punish us not by the uncleanness of these men, neither chastise us by their profane doings, lest the transgressors boast in their wrath or exult in the insolence of their tongue, saying, 18. We have trodden down the house of the sanctuary as the houses of the abominations are trodden down. 19. Blot out our sins and scatter abroad our offences and manifest thy mercy at this hour. 20. Let thy compassion speedily overtake us, and put praises in the mouth of the fallen and broken in heart, granting us peace.

21–24 **Punishment of Philopator.**

21. Then the God who beholds all, the Father of all, holy among the holy ones, hearing the supplication *spoken* according to the law, scourged him who was greatly uplifted in violence and insolence, 22. shaking him to and fro as a reed by the wind, so that lying on the ground powerless and paralysed in body he could not so much as speak, being

18. "Abominations" is of course out of place as part of the boast of heathen speakers.

21 ff. Cf. the punishment of Heliodorus in 2 Macc. iii. 22–30, and of Apollonius in 4 Macc. iv. 11, also the illness of Antiochus in 2 Macc. ix. 4.

smitten by a righteous judgment. 23. Whereupon his friends and body-guard seeing that the chastisement which had overtaken him was swift, and fearing lest he should even die, speedily drew him out, being overwhelmed by an exceeding great fear. 24. But having after some time recovered himself, he by no means came to repentance though he had been thus punished, but departed with bitter threats.

25–33. Measures taken against the Alexandrian Jews.

25. So, arriving in Egypt, and going on further in his wickedness, through his boon companions and associates, who have been already mentioned, utter strangers to all justice, 26. he was not content with his countless excesses, but even reached such a pitch of insolence that he raised evil reports in those parts, and many of his friends watching carefully the royal purpose, themselves also followed his will. 27. He purposed publicly to inflict a disgrace upon the Jewish nation, and erected a pillar on the tower in the palace with the inscription, 28. That none who did not sacrifice should be allowed to enter their temples; and that

25. "Already mentioned": Where? See Intr. p. xii.

28. *i. e.* Only those who conformed to the official worship might continue the practice of their own religion, a condition obviously aimed at the Jews. For attempts to make the Jews conform to the official religion as a condition of citizenship, see Jos., *Ant.* XII. iii. 2; *c. Ap.* ii. 6.

29. Bacchus seems to have been the family God of the Ptolemies, and Philopator was himself apparently branded with the ivy-leaf; see Philo *de Mon.* i. 8 for Jews who allowed themselves to be branded. In 2 Macc. vi. 1 we have an account of the attempt of Antiochus to introduce the worship of Dionysus into Jerusalem.

all Jews should be degraded to the rank of natives and the condition of serfs, and that those who spoke against it should be taken by force and put to death; 29. and that those who were registered should even be branded on their bodies with an ivy-leaf, the emblem of Dionysus, and be reduced to their former limited status. 30. But that he might not appear an enemy to all, he added, But if any of them prefer to join those who are initiated into the mysteries, they shall have equal rights with the citizens of Alexandria.

31. Some obviously hating the price paid for the religion of their city readily gave themselves up, expecting to gain great glory from their association with the king. 32. But the greater part stood firm with a noble courage, and departed not from their religion; and paying money as a ransom for their lives fearlessly attempted to save themselves from the registration. 33. And they remained of good hope that they should find help, and abhorred those who parted from them, accounting them as

30. Josephus frequently states that the Jews of Alexandria possessed full citizen rights before this period, but the whole question is obscure. Apparently whatever rights they enjoyed were granted to them as individuals, not as a nation, and it is doubtful how far they extended beyond Alexandria. There are, in fact, traces of an edict of Physcon by which Egyptians and Syrians (Jews) were granted the rights of Alexandrian citizenship at a later period; *i. e.* there was probably always room for some extension of privilege. For a similar attempt to impose Antiochene citizenship cf. 2 Macc. iv. 9.

31. The text and translation of the first part of the verse are doubtful; if the above rendering is right, the reference will be to the Temple tax of one-third, or half, a shekel, which all Jews, whether resident in Palestine or not, were expected to pay towards the upkeep of the Temple. Note that the book is in part a polemic against lax or Hellenizing Jews: see Intr. p. vii.

enemies of their nation, and excluding them from social intercourse and the rendering of any service.

III. 1–10. The Jews and their Heathen Neighbours.

1. The impious *king* perceiving this was so greatly enraged that he was not only wroth with those who dwelt at Alexandria, but was even more bitterly hostile to those in the country, and ordered that they should all be speedily gathered together, and put an end to by the most cruel death. 2. While this was being arranged a malicious report was noised abroad against the *Jewish* nation on the part of men who agreed together to do them hurt, an occasion being afforded for representing that they hindered them from the observance of the laws. 3. But the Jews continued to maintain their goodwill towards the kings and their unswerving fidelity. 4. Yet, worshipping God, and living according to his law, they held themselves apart in the matter of food; and for this reason they were disliked by some; 5. but adorning their conversation by the good practice of righteousness they were established in the good report of all. 6. But of this good practice, which was the common talk of all men with regard to the nation, the foreigners took no account; 7. but they talked continually of the difference *they made* with regard to worship and food, alleging that they were friendly neither to the king or his army, but ill-disposed, and bitterly hostile to his interests; thus they cast no small

III. 4. The unpopularity caused by Jewish peculiarities is of course constantly referred to by Greek and Roman writers; cf. the main theme of 4 Macc. and the defence in the *Letter of Aristeas*, 128 ff.

opprobrium upon them. 8. But the Greeks in the city having been in no way injured by them, 9. seeing the unexpected disturbance about them, and the unlooked for concourse, were not able to help them—for they lived under a tyranny—but tried to comfort them and were indignant, expecting that this affair would take a change for the better; for so great a community could not be thus allowed to perish when it had committed no fault. 10. And already some of their neighbours and friends and business associates, taking aside some of *the Jews* secretly, gave pledges of their protection and earnest endeavours for their assistance.

11–30. The King orders the Arrest of all Jews in his Dominions.

11. So *the king* puffed up by his present prosperity, and regarding not the power of the Most High God, but supposing that he himself would always hold firmly to the same purpose, wrote this letter against them: 12. King Ptolemy Philopator to his generals and soldiers in Egypt and every place greeting and prosperity. 13. I myself and our affairs prosper. 14. Our expedition into Asia, of which you yourselves are aware, having been brought to an expected conclusion by the help of the Gods, 15. granted us deliberately, we thought, not by force of arms, but by kindness and much benevolence to foster the peoples of Coele Syria and Phoenicia, bestowing benefits upon them with all readiness. 16. And having granted large

8. The Greeks are the better class element, as opposed to the native Egyptians; there is some evidence that their position also was attacked by Physcon, if the incident belongs to that reign (Intr. p. xx).

revenues to the temples in the cities, we came to Jerusalem as well, going up thither to show honour to the temple of the accursed people who never cease from their folly. 17. Seemingly they welcomed our presence, but their welcome was insincere ; for when we were eager to enter their shrine and to honour it with magnificent and beautiful offerings, 18. carried away by their ancient pride they prevented us from going in, being left unhurt by our power on account of the benevolence we have to all. 19. But they show plainly their ill-will towards us, and standing alone among nations in their stiff-necked resistance to kings and their own benefactors, they refuse to take anything in a proper spirit. 20. We accommodated ourselves to their folly, and returning victoriously to Egypt, and treating all nations with kindness, have acted as was right. 21. And under these circumstances, making known to all our ready forgiveness of their fellow countrymen, on account of their alliance, and the numerous matters which have been freely entrusted to them from of old, we have ventured to make a change, and have made up our mind to hold them worthy even of Alexandrian citizenship, and to give them a share in our religious rites from time to time. 22. But they taking this in the opposite spirit and rejecting the good *offer* with their inborn ill-feeling, and continually inclining to evil, 23. not only refused the invaluable citizenship, but also show their contempt silently and by words for the few among them who behave properly towards us, in every

21. We see from the Elephantine Papyri that as early as the fifth century B.C. Jews had been established by the Persians as garrisons in Elephantine and Assouan; cf. vi. 25, vii. 7 ; *Aristeas* 36 ; Jos., *Ant.* XII. 1.

case secretly expecting that through their infamous behaviour we should speedily alter our policy. 24. Therefore having good proof for our persuasion that they are evilly disposed towards us in every way, and taking precautions lest when some sudden tumult is raised against us hereafter we should have these impious people behind our backs as traitors and barbarous foes, 25. we give order that, as soon as this epistle reaches you, you shall at once send to us with harsh and violent treatment those who dwell among you with women and children, binding them fast in every way with iron chains, to meet a terrible and ignominious death, as befits traitors. 26. For we believe that when they have been punished together, our estate will be established for the future in the surest and best condition. 27. And whoever shall harbour any Jew, old man or child or very suckling, shall with all his house be tortured to death with the most horrible torments. 28. Information may be given by any one ; *the informer* to receive the estate of the guilty party, with two thousand drachmae from the royal treasury, and to be honoured with freedom. 29. And every place where a Jew shall be detected at all in concealment, shall be made a waste and burnt with fire, and shall become entirely useless to any mortal creature for all time. 30. Thus ran the letter.

28. The text is uncertain. The above translation follows an emendation of Deissmann, the reference probably being to the Egyptian populace who did not enjoy full rights. Since they disliked the Jews (cf. iii. 7), they would be willing to inform against them. It is possible, however, that we should read "be crowned at the Eleutheria," the Eleutheria being sometimes applied to a festival of Dionysus (cf. ii. 29 f.).

IV. 1–21. The Jews brought to Alexandria and imprisoned.

1. In every place where this decree reached, a feast at the public charges was made for the heathen with exultation and joy, the hatred which had long before become inveterate in their hearts being now freely displayed. 2. But among the Jews there was unceasing grief and a lamentable crying with tears, their heart being all aflame with their groanings, as they bewailed the unlooked for destruction which had been suddenly decreed against them. 3. What district or city or what habitable place at all or what streets were not filled with wailing and lamentation for them? 4. For in such manner with harshness and pitiless heart were they sent away with one accord by the generals in the cities, that at the sight of their unusual sufferings even some of their enemies with common pity before their eyes, remembering the uncertain issue of life, wept at their hapless departure. 5. For there was carried away a multitude of old men, covered with their wealth of grey hairs, forcing to a swift journey their feet bent and sluggish from old age under the violence of their rough driving which knew no shame. 6. And the young women which had but lately entered the marriage chamber for the society of wedded life, with lamentations instead of joy, and with their perfumed locks covered with dust, were carried away unveiled, and with one accord sang a dirge in place of the wedding hymn, scarred by the cruel treatment of the heathen; 7. and as prisoners *exposed to* public *gaze* they were dragged along with violence until they were embarked on board. 8. And their consorts, with ropes on their necks instead of garlands, in the flower of their

youthful age, spent the remainder of the days of their marriage feast in dirges instead of mirth and youthful ease, seeing the grave already yawning at their feet. 9. And they were brought on board driven like wild beasts under the constraint of iron bonds; some were fastened by the neck to the benches of the ships; others had their feet secured in the strongest fetters; 10. and further they were shut off from the light by the thick planks above, that in entire darkness they might be treated as traitors throughout the whole voyage.

11. When they had been brought to the place called Schedia, and the voyage was completed as determined by the king, he ordered them to be imprisoned in the hippodrome that was before the city, a place of immense circuit and very suitable for making them a gazing stock to all who entered the city, and to those of the inhabitants (?) who went into the country to sojourn, so that they might neither communicate with his army, or in any way claim protection of the walls. 12. But after this had been done, hearing that their fellow-countrymen in the city often went out in secret and bewailed the shameful fate of their brethren, 13. he was enraged and ordered that they should be treated in exactly the same way as the others, receiving in no respect a lesser punishment. 14. And *he commanded* that the whole race should be registered by name, not for the wearisome service of labour which was briefly described before, but that they should be tortured with the torments to which he had sentenced them, and

IV. 11. Schedia was three miles from Alexandria; the Hippodrome lay in front of the east gate of the city.

14. *i.e.* they were not merely to be reduced to the condition of serfs (ii. 28), but to be executed.

finally be made an end of in the space of a single day. 15. The registration therefore was carried on with bitter haste and zealous diligence from sunrise to sunset, coming to an end after forty days but still uncompleted.

16. But the king was greatly and continually filled with joy, ordering feasts in the temples of his idols, with a heart far astray from the truth and profane lips, praising dumb *idols* which could not speak to them or help, and uttering words which were not fitting against the Most High God. 17. But after the aforesaid space of time the scribes reported to the king that they were no longer able to continue the registration of the Jews on account of their incalculable number; 18. although the greater number of them were still in the country, some still remaining in their homes and others on the journey, it was impossible for all the generals in Egypt. 19. And after he had threatened them fiercely as having been bribed to contrive their escape, he was at length clearly convinced on this point, 20. when they told him and proved that even the paper manufactory and the pens which they used for writing had already given out. 21. But this was the working of the invincible providence of him who was aiding the Jews from heaven.

16. Cf. Dan. iv. 4.

17. Though Philo gives the number of Jews in Alexandria as a million, the passage is exaggerated and bombastic.

21. Note that "providence" is simply an attribute of God, not a periphrasis for Him, as so often in the literature of this period.

V. 1–22. The King orders the Destruction of the Jews, but changes his Mind.

1. Then he called Hermon who was in charge of the elephants, and filled with bitter anger and wrath, and altogether inflexible, 2. ordered him for the next day to drug all the elephants—in number five hundred—with copious handfuls of frankincense, and abundance of unmixed wine, and then when they were maddened by the plentiful supply of drink to bring them in to compass the fate of the Jews. 3. And giving this order he turned to his feasting, having gathered together those of his friends and army who were most hostile to the Jews, 4. while [Hermon] the ruler of the elephants attended to the injunction with all care. 5. And the servants who were in charge of the Jews went out in the evening and bound the hands of the hapless wretches, taking all other precautions to keep them safe through the night, imagining that the nation would at one blow meet its final destruction. 6. But the Jews who seemed to the heathen to be destitute of all protection on account of the constraint and bonds which encompassed them on every side, 7. with crying that would not be silenced, all called with tears on the almighty Lord and ruler of all power, their merciful God and father, 8. beseeching him to frustrate the wicked design against them and to deliver them by a glorious manifestation from the fate yawning ready

V. 2. Philadelphus had 300 elephants, Philopator at Raphia had 73; the writer again exaggerates.

5. The binding of the Jews has already been mentioned in iii. 25, iv. 9; presumably their fetters had been taken off once they were safe in the Hippodrome.

before them. 9. So their prayer ascended fervently to heaven; 10. but Hermon, having given the pitiless elephants drink till they were filled with the plenteous supply of wine and sated with frankincense, came early in the morning to the palace to report to the king about this. 11. But the good creature, bestowed night and day from the beginning of time by him who gives the portion of sleep to all, *even* to whomsoever he will, *this* he sent upon the king; 12. and he was overborne by a sweet and heavy *slumber* by the operation of the Lord, thus being greatly foiled in his lawless purpose, and utterly disappointed in his unchangeable design. 13. But the Jews having escaped the appointed hour praised their holy God, and again besought him who is ready to forgive to manifest the might of his all powerful hand before the proud eyes of the heathen. 14. But when the middle of the tenth hour had nearly come he who was in charge of the invitations, seeing the guests assembled, went to the king and shook him. 15. And having woken him up with difficulty, he pointed out that the hour for the banquet was already passing, reminding him of the circumstances. 16. And the king considering these, betook himself to his cups and ordered those who had come for the banquet to take their places over against him. 17. And when this had been done he called on them to give themselves

14. That is, 3.30 p.m., according to the Babylonian reckoning which was in use in Egypt.

16 ff. The picture of the king's habits agrees with the character given of him elsewhere; see note on i. 1. One of the extant fragments of Ptolemy Megalopolitanus speaks of his boon companions. His vacillations, as described in the text, make the story somewhat difficult to follow, but have a certain dramatic value.

up to revelry, and counting themselves highly honoured to reckon as a joy the feast, late as it was. 18. And when the entertainment had gone on for some time, the king called Hermon and asked with fierce threats why the Jews had been allowed to survive that day. 19. But when he pointed out that he had completely carried out the order overnight, and his friends confirmed him, 20. the king with a rage more fierce than Phalaris, said that *the Jews* might thank his sleep for the *respite* of the day; but, he added, make ready the elephants in the same manner without further delay for the following day to destroy utterly the accursed Jews. 21. When the king had spoken, all who were present readily assented with joy with one accord, and each one departed to his own house. 22. But they did not spend the night season in sleep, so much as in devising all manner of cruel insults for those whom they thought to be in such wretched plight.

23–35. The Order again reversed.

23. So as soon as the cock had crowed in the morning, Hermon harnessed the beasts and began to put them in motion in the great colonnade. 24. And the multitudes in the city assembled for the piteous spectacle, eagerly looking for the break of day. 25. But the Jews drawing their last breath for but a brief moment more, with tearful supplications and strains of woe, raising their hands to heaven, besought the Most High God again to help them speedily. 26. The rays of the sun were not yet scattered abroad, and the king was receiving

20. Phalaris, a tyrant of Agrigentum in the 6th cent., whose cruelty was proverbial; cf. *v.* 42.

his friends, when Hermon came to his side and invited him to go forth, explaining that the desire of the king was ready to be fulfilled. 27. When the king understood him, he was astonished at the unusual *summons* to go forth, having been overwhelmed with complete ignorance, and asked what was the matter on account of which this had been so zealously completed. 28. But this was the operation of God the ruler of all, who had put in his mind forgetfulness of his former devices. 29. But Hermon and all his friends pointed to the beasts and the army: It is prepared, O king, according to thine eager purpose. 30. But he was filled with fierce anger at the words, because by the providence of God he had entirely lost his wits on this matter, and looking on him said threateningly, 31. If thy parents or offspring were here, I would have furnished them as this rich banquet for the fierce beasts in place of the Jews against whom I have no charge and who have shown in a pre-eminent degree a full and unshaken loyalty to my ancestors. 32. And indeed, if it were not for the affection *kindled* by our life together and thy service, thou shouldest have died instead of these. 33. So Hermon met with an unexpected and dangerous threat, and his eyes and countenance fell. 34. And *the king's* friends, slinking away sullenly one by one, sent away the assembled crowds, each to his own business. 35. And the Jews hearing the words of the king, praised the Lord God who had manifested *his glory*, the king of kings, having obtained this help also from him.

36–51. The Massacre finally on the Point of Execution.

36. But the king, having arranged the banquet once more in the same way, ordered them to turn to their pleasures. 37. And calling Hermon he said threateningly, How often, thou wretched creature, must I give thee orders about these very things? 38. Even now make ready the elephants for the morrow to destroy the Jews. 39. But his kinsmen who sat at table with him wondered at his shifting purpose, and remonstrated, 40. How long, O King, dost thou make trial of us as though we were fools, now for the third time giving orders for their destruction, and once more when the matter is in hand changing and cancelling thy decree? 41. Wherefore the city is in a tumult through its expectation, and being crowded with throngs of people has now been several times in danger of being put to plunder. 42. On this the king, a Phalaris in all things, was filled with madness, and, reckoning nothing of the changes of mind which had been wrought in him for the protection of the Jews, swore strongly a fruitless oath that he would without delay send to the grave the Jews mangled by the knees and feet of the beasts, 43. and would march against Judaea and quickly level it to the ground with fire and sword, and burning to the earth their temple which we might not enter would quickly make it empty for all time of those who sacrificed therein. 44. Then his friends and kinsmen went away joyfully with good confidence, and ordered the army to the most

39. Kinsmen was the regular term for the high officials at the Ptolemaic court.

43. The text is very uncertain.

convenient places of the city to keep guard. 45. And the ruler of the elephants, having driven the beasts into a state almost one might say of madness by fragrant draughts of wine mingled with frankincense, and having fitted them in a fearful guise with implements, 46. at dawn, the city being now filled with countless multitudes thronging towards the hippodrome, entered the palace and urged on the king to the business that lay before him. 47. And he, his impious heart filled with fierce anger, started forth with all his force with the beasts, determined with an unfeeling heart and his own eyes to gaze on the grievous and piteous destruction of the afore-mentioned *Jews*. 48. And when they saw the dust raised by the elephants going out at the gate, and the armed force accompanying them, and the movement of the crowd, and heard the far-sounding tumult, 49. thinking that the last crisis of their life had come and the end of their miserable suspense, they betook themselves to lamentation and groans, and kissed one another, embracing their relatives and falling on their necks, parents and children, mothers and daughters ; and others with new-born babes at their breast drawing their last milk. 50. But none the less, reflecting on their former deliverances sent from heaven, with one accord they threw themselves on their faces, 51. and took the babes from their breasts, and cried out with an exceeding loud voice, beseeching the ruler of all power by a manifestation to show pity upon them now that they were come to the gates of death.

45. The implements are apparently scythes and knives attached to the elephants.

VI. 1–15. The Prayer of Eleazar.

1. But a certain Eleazar, a man of note among the priests of the country, whose years had already reached old age, and who was adorned with every virtue of life, made the elders who were round him cease from calling on the holy God, and prayed thus: 2. King of great power, most high, almighty God, who governest all creation with loving-kindness, 3. look upon the seed of Abraham, the children of Jacob thy sanctified one, the people of thy sanctified inheritance, who are unjustly perishing, strangers in a strange land. 4. O Father, thou didst destroy Pharaoh, the former ruler of this Egypt, with his multitude of chariots, when he was lifted high in his lawless insolence and a tongue speaking great things, drowning him together with his proud host, and didst cause the light of thy mercy to shine upon the race of Israel. 5. Thou, when Sennacherib, the cruel king of the Assyrians, was puffed up by his countless hosts, after he had taken the whole earth captive by his sword, and was lifted up against thy holy city speaking grievous words of boasting and insolence, thou, Lord, didst break him in pieces, making manifest thy power to many nations. 6. Thou, when the

VI. 1. The name Eleazar occurs constantly (e.g. *Aristeas* 41), especially as the typical intercessor of grey hairs and extraordinary holiness (2 Macc. vi. 18; 4 Macc. vi. 5, vii. 1). A discussion of the significance of this feature will be found in Bacon's article, "The Festival of Lives," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xv., No. 2 (Jan. 1917).

A. has "Jews" instead of "priests," presumably objecting to the recognition of Jewish priests in Alexandria; but cf. vii. 13.

2. See note on ii. 2.

6. This is apparently a quotation from the LXX. of Dan.

three friends in Babylonia freely gave their life to the flames that they should not serve vain things, didst make as dew the fiery furnace, and deliver them unharmed even to the hair of their head, turning the flame upon all their adversaries. 7. Thou, when Daniel was cast through the slanders of envy to the lions beneath the ground as food for wild beasts, didst bring him up to the light unhurt. 8. And when Jonah was languishing unpitied in the belly of the sea-born monster, thou didst restore him, O Father, uninjured to all his household. 9. And now, thou hater of insolence, rich in mercy, protector of all, quickly manifest thyself to the saints of Israel's line, in their insolent oppression by the abominable and lawless heathen. 10. And if our life has been ensnared in impious deeds during our sojourning, save us from the hand of the enemy, and destroy us, O Lord, by whatever fate thou choosest. 11. Let not the men whose thoughts are vanity bless their vain gods for the destruction of thy beloved saying, Neither has their God delivered them. 12. Thou who hast all might and all power, the Eternal, look now upon us; pity us who by the mad insolence of lawless men are being sent to death as traitors; 13. and let the heathen to-day fear thy invincible might, thou glorious one, who hast mighty works for the salvation of the race of Israel. 14. The whole multitude of babes with their parents beseecheth thee with tears. 15. Let it be shown to all heathen that thou art with us, O Lord, and hast not turned thy face away from us; but as thou hast

iii. 50; if so, it shows that the book cannot be earlier than the last quarter of the 2nd cent. B.C.

8. The restoration of Jonah is not mentioned in the O.T.

11. Cf. Wisd. ii. 16 ff.

said, Not even when they were in the land of their enemies have I forgotten them, even so bring it to pass, O Lord.

16–21. The Deliverance.

16. And when Eleazar was even now ending his prayer, the king with the beasts and the whole insolent array of his army came to the hippodrome. 17. And the Jews beholding it raised a great cry to heaven, so that now the surrounding valleys re-echoed it, and caused in all the hosts an incontrollable trembling. 18. Then the greatly glorious, almighty, and true God, making manifest his holy face, opened the gates of heaven, from which two glorious angels of terrible aspect descended, visible to all but the Jews, 19. and withstood them and filled the army of the adversaries with confusion and terror, and bound them with immoveable fetters. 20. And a great horror seized on the body of the king as well, and his fierce insolence was forgotten. 21. And the beasts turned round against the armed hosts that followed them and began to tread them under foot and destroy them.

22–29. The King becomes the Protector of the Jews.

22. And the king's wrath was turned to pity and tears on account of that which he had devised

18 ff. See Intr. pp. x ff. For the terror inspired by visions see 2 Macc. iii. 24 ff., x. 29; Wisd. xvii. 3, 15, xviii. 17; and cf. the apparitions at Marathon and Salamis. The feature that the angels were not seen by the Jews themselves is curious and hard to explain; possibly it is due to the writer's desire to make as little as possible of the belief in angels which he does not countenance elsewhere (see Intr. p. vii).

before. 23. For hearing the outcry and seeing them all prostrate to meet their death, he wept and angrily threatened his friends saying, 24. Ye usurp the kingly power, surpassing even tyrants in your cruelty ; and me myself, who am your benefactor, ye plot to deprive of my dominion and my life, devising secretly things that are unprofitable to the kingdom. 25. Who hath driven each one from his home the men who have faithfully held the fortresses of our country, and gathered them here without reason? 26. Who hath thus lawlessly overwhelmed with indignities those who from the beginning have been in all things conspicuous beyond all nations in their goodwill towards us, and have ofttimes encountered the worst dangers man *can undergo?* 27. Loose, yea loose, their unjust bonds ; send them to their homes in peace, asking pardon for what has been already done. 28. Set free the sons of the almighty living God of Heaven, who from the days of our ancestors until now hath granted an unimpaired stability and glory to our estate. 29. Thus he spake ; and they, having been set free in a moment, praised the holy God their saviour, having but now escaped death.

30–40. **The Jews celebrate their Deliverance.**

30. Then the king returning to the city called the officer who was over the revenues, and ordered him to supply to the Jews for a space of seven days wines and all else necessary for a feast, decreeing that they should keep a festival of deliverance with all manner of rejoicing in the very place in which they had thought to meet their

25. See note on iii. 21.

fate. 31. Then those who before were reviled and nigh to the grave, or rather had already one foot therein, instead of a bitter and most lamentable death, held a banquet to celebrate their deliverance, and full of joy they portioned between their companies the place which had been prepared for their destruction and grave. 32. And ceasing the piteous strain of dirges, they took up the song of their fathers, praising God the saviour of Israel and doer of wonders; and laying aside all wailing and lamentation they formed dances in token of joy for their safe deliverance. 33. And likewise the king too, convening a great banquet in celebration of this, unceasingly gave thanks in exalted terms to heaven for their unexpected deliverance. 34. And those who before supposed that they (the Jews) were doomed to destruction and to be food for birds, and had joyfully carried out the registration, groaned at finding themselves covered with confusion and their fiery blast of insolence quenched ingloriously. 35. And the Jews, as we have already said, formed the dance which we have before described, and spent their time in feasting with joyful thanksgiving and psalms. 36. And establishing a public ordinance about this, to be observed for all their sojourning from generation to generation, they appointed the days mentioned to be kept as a festival, not for the sake of drinking or gluttony, but in memory of the salvation granted them by

34. Cf. Esth. ix.

36. Jos., *c. Ap.* ii. 6, mentions the institution of a Feast in his version of the incident. Such feasts are a constant feature in the literature of this period (Esth. ix. 15; 1 Macc. iv. 56, vii. 59, xiii. 50; 2 Macc. x. 6, xv. 36; Judith xvi. 25, Vulgate), and it is possible that our book may be intended in part to be read as a Memorial Oration at the annual Festival; see Intr. to 4 Macc. pp. x ff.

God. 37. And they petitioned the king, desiring to depart to their home.

38. Now they were registering them from the twenty-fifth day of Pachon to the fourth of Epiphis, for forty days; and they were appointing their destruction from the fifth of Epiphis to the seventh, three days. 39. And on these did the ruler of all with great glory manifest his mercy and deliver them one and all unhurt. 40. And they feasted, provided with all things by the king, till the fourteenth day on which they also made petition for their return.

VI. 41—VII. 9. **Letter of Philopator.**

41. And the king granting their request wrote for them the following letter to the generals in the cities, generously declaring his purpose.

1. King Ptolomaeus Philopator to the generals in Egypt and to all set over his affairs greeting and prosperity. 2. We ourselves and our children prosper, the great God directing our estate as we will. 3. Certain of our friends with evil heart by frequently urging the matter upon us persuaded us to gather together in a body the Jews in the kingdom, and to inflict upon them extraordinary punishments as traitors, 4. urging that our state would never be firmly established, on account of the enmity which they have to all nations, until this was done. 5. And they, bringing them bound with harsh treatment as slaves, or rather traitors,

38. *Pachon*, April 26 to May 25; *Epiphi*, or Epeiph, June 25 to July 24. The names are Egyptian, the Egyptian and Macedonian Calendars having been combined towards the end of the 2nd cent. B.C.

VII. 5. For Scythian cruelty cf. 2 Macc. iv. 47; 4 Macc. x. 7.

without any enquiry or examination, attempted to put them to death, girding themselves with a cruelty fiercer than Scythian customs. 6. But we severely threatened them for this, and of the clemency which we have to all men scarcely granted them their lives; and knowing that the God of heaven surely protects the Jews, fighting on their side continually as a father for his children, 7. and taking into account the goodwill as of a friend which they have shown unswervingly to us and our ancestors, we have rightly absolved them from all blame on whatsoever account. 8. And we have ordered them each to return to his own home, and that no one in any place should injure them at all or reproach them for their unreasonable sufferings. 9. For know well that if we devise any evil against them, or harm them in any way, we shall have not man but the ruler of all power, the Most High God, as an adversary to avenge what is done, *and that* in every way and at all time without being able to escape him. Fare ye well.

10–23. The Jews return Home and punish Renegades.

10. *The Jews* receiving this epistle did not at once make haste to prepare for their departure, but desired further of the king that those of the Jewish race who had of their own will transgressed against the holy God [and the law of God] should receive at their hand fitting punishment, 11. urging that those who for their belly's sake had transgressed

9. One of the main objects of the book seems to have been to show how dangerous it was to interfere with the Jews; see Intr. p. vi.

10. For the punishment of renegades, see Intr. p. vii.

against the divine command would never be well disposed to the king's commands either. 12. And he acknowledging the truth of what they said and praising them, gave them full indemnity to destroy in every place in his dominions those who had transgressed against the law of God, *and this* with all freedom without any further authority or enquiry from the king. 13. Then having received his words with applause, as was fitting, their priests and the whole multitude with shouts of hallelujah departed in joy. 14. So as they went on their way they slew whomsoever they met of their countrymen who had been defiled, and put them to death with ignominy. 15. And on that day they slew over three hundred men, and they kept it as a joyful festival, having destroyed the impious. 16. But they themselves who had held fast to God even unto death, and had entered into the full enjoyment of their safe delivery, departed from the city crowned with all manner of fragrant flowers and with cries of joy, in praises and melodious hymns giving thanks to the God of their fathers, the eternal saviour of Israel.

17. And when they had reached Ptolemais, called, on account of the peculiarity of the place, The Rose-bearing, the fleet, according to their general wish waited for them seven days, 18. and they held there a banquet to celebrate their deliverance, the king having generously provided for them all things for their journey until each one had come to his own home. 19. Having reached the end of

17. This is not the well-known Ptolemais in Upper Egypt, but "Ptolemais at the harbour," 12 miles S.W. of Cairo. The title "Rose-bearing" is not found elsewhere.

19. For the Festival see note on vi. 36. The mention of this second festival suggests that there were locai varia-

their voyage in peace with befitting thanksgivings, there too in like manner they determined to observe these days as well as a festival during the time of their sojourning; 20. and having inscribed them as holy on a pillar, and having dedicated a place of prayer on the spot where they had held their festival, they departed unharmed, free, and full of joy, being brought safely on their journey by land and sea and river according to the king's command, each to his own country, 21. having even greater authority than before in the eyes of their enemies with glory and respect, and being despoiled by no one at all of their goods. 22. And they all recovered the whole of their property according to the registration, so that those who held any of it returned it with great fear, the great God having perfectly wrought great things for their salvation.

23. Blessed be the deliverer of Israel for ever and ever.—AMEN.

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tions in the date at which the feast commemorating the deliverance was observed.

20. "Sea" may refer to Lake Moeris (cf. the use of the word for the Sea of Galilee), or it may be due to the writer's rhetorical generalization.

This local *Proseuché*, or place of prayer, is interesting. We find mention in the Papyri of such a *Proseuché* at Arsinoe in the 2nd cent. B.C.

21. No confiscation of property has been mentioned, though it may be assumed as part of the general punishment. The reference, however, may be a reminiscence of some other occasion on which an attempt at confiscation was frustrated; as we have seen, the book combines various attacks on the position of the Jews (see Intr. p xii).

23. For examples of such concluding doxologies see note on 4 Macc. xviii. 24.

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TRANSLATIONS OF EARLY DOCUMENTS

SERIES II

HELLENISTIC-JEWISH TEXTS

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MACCABEES

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MACCABEES

BY

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VICAR OF WEST HENDRED, BERKS.

LONDON:
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INTRODUCTION

General Character of the Book

The main subject of 4 Maccabees is the heroic martyrdom of Eleazar, an aged priest, and an unnamed mother with her seven sons, who were put to death with horrible tortures by Antiochus Epiphanes. Their crime consisted in a refusal to eat swine's flesh and forsake the Jewish Law. The story is told less fully in 2 Maccabees; the distinctive feature of the present work is that the writer uses the example of their endurance, which was evidently already well known, to illustrate and prove the power of "God-directed Reason" and of a true philosophy. He writes as one who is eager to commend, with a few modifications, the accepted Greek philosophy of the day, which he regards as fully embodied in the Mosaic Law. As we shall see, the book was probably written as a Festival Oration for the Feast of the Dedication, on which among other events the memory of these martyrs was celebrated. It was written in Greek, probably at Alexandria, somewhere near the beginning of our era, by an author who is completely unidentified.

The Historical Situation

The book can hardly be appreciated without some knowledge of its historical setting. After the death of Alexander the Great, Palestine became the cockpit of the struggles between the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria, the two dynasties which divided his empire between them. In the same way at an earlier period it had been the Belgium of Egypt and the great Powers of the East. The Jews suffered as a small nation always will under such circumstances, but they still enjoyed a certain measure of local independence and self-government under the High Priests, and no serious attempt was made to interfere with their national customs or religion. On the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes in B.C. 175 a great change took place. Antiochus was an enthusiastic believer in Hellenic culture and civilisation, and saw in it a means of giving some measure of coherence to his loosely knit empire. With the ready support of a certain section of the Jews themselves he began to introduce Greek customs into Jerusalem, the inevitable gymnasium and athletic exercises, the Greek cap and chlamys, following it up with a deliberate attempt to install heathen rites even in the Temple itself.[1]

Some of the points at issue may seem harmless enough in themselves, but they are capable of being clothed with a terrible significance when

[1] An excellent account of Antiochus will be found in Bevan's *Jerusalem under the High Priests*, ch. iii.

regarded as the symbols of an alien life and faith. The interest of Antiochus himself did not of course really lie in religion. He had nothing in common with the modern proselytiser, with a fanatical belief in his own system as the only means of salvation. What he cared about was the development and general social condition of his kingdom ; and when once his will had been expressed, he had all the autocrat's dislike of finding himself thwarted. Such a policy was naturally bound to bring him into sharp collision with the stricter section of the Jews. Their refusal to worship new gods or to admit strange altars into their Temple would no doubt be intelligible, however exasperating. But their obstinacy on questions of dress and food would be to a Greek unreasonable as well ; why refuse the good things God has given ? [1]

Since neither party was able to understand the other, the conflict was likely to be fought to the bitter end. It was in fact " this crisis which opened the roll of martyrs." [2] The statement may at first cause surprise ; others had of course previously suffered for their loyalty to God and religion, but it was usually because their religion led them to do something which was objectionable to the ruling powers. It was not merely a clear choice between death and the change of religion. That was a new thing introduced by Antiochus Epiphanes. The story of our book is the story of these first martyrs, and, though there may be legendary additions, and the story is certainly embellished

[1] See v. 7. [2] Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

in 4 Maccabees, there is no reason to question the main facts. The events of the crisis gave rise to other literature written to encourage sufferers under the novel test of their faith. The outstanding example is the Book of Daniel, while the same struggle with the persecuting powers of the world forms the background of much of the Apocalyptic literature which followed it.[1] In Daniel, however, the faithful are miraculously delivered at the last moment. If this somewhat facile view was meant to be taken literally, it was soon contradicted by the facts, and the reward of fidelity had to be looked for in some other direction.[2] It was indeed the suffering even unto death of the righteous servants of God which gave the great impetus to the growing belief in the resurrection and a future life of rewards and punishments, which, as we shall see, is very prominent in 2 and 4 Maccabees.

With regard to certain elements of the superiority of Hellenic culture the modern world will be inclined to sympathise with Antiochus. But his methods, however much they may have been afterwards imitated within Christianity itself, were not only wrong but tended to defeat their own end. The particular objection to the eating of pork may be trivial to the Christian of to-day; but like the later challenge to drop the pinch of incense into the fire in honour of the Roman Emperor, it stood

[1] See Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, ch. i.

[2] Dan. ix. 26 ("the anointed one shall be cut off") recognises that deliverance does not always come, and in xii. 2 we find the compensating doctrine of the resurrection.

for far more. Devotion to the Jewish Law was still a necessary element in the preparation of the world for Christ; the nation, with all its peculiar weaknesses and rugged strength, needed to be preserved within its "fence" as the seedplot of the religion of the future. In particular was it essential that an unflinching monotheism should thus be safeguarded against an easy-going tendency to identify gods and religions. We owe it to these first martyrs and their companions that these objects were secured. Their passive resistance was the first step in opposition to the autocrat's policy. It was followed up by the active resistance of the Maccabees which restored to the Jewish race some measure of temporary independence.

One point in the sequel is of some importance for our immediate purpose. Under John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannæus the later Maccabees quarrelled with the stricter party of the Law, the *Chasīdim*, or Pharisees as they afterwards came to be called. As a result later orthodox Judaism avoided all mention of these Maccabean heroes. The Maccabees are hardly mentioned in the Mishna or Talmud,[1] while the memory of these earlier martyrs was preserved only in the service for the Feast of Dedication.

[1] They are referred to in the present service for the Feast of Dedication; see Singer, *Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, pp. 52, 275.

Object and Character of the Book

It has been widely held, and with reason, that 4 Maccabees is a Homily written, and probably delivered, in connection with some festival of the Seven Martyrs. In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* ("The Festival of Lives given for the Nation in Jewish and Christian Faith"), vol. xv., no. 2, January 1917, Professor Bacon examines with great acuteness the leading features of the Feast of Dedication, mainly in relation to our treatise. On December 25, 168 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple by erecting an altar to Zeus and offering heathen sacrifices (1 Macc. i. 36, 54 ff.). Three years later, after the victories of Judas Maccabæus, the Temple was re-dedicated on the same date, and December 25 was afterwards observed as the Feast of *Chanukkah*, or Renewal (*Encænia*). It became one of the most popular of Jewish Festivals, comprising various elements. In the Letters which form the first two chapters of 2 Maccabees we find directions given by the Jerusalem Jews to the Jews of Alexandria for the due observance of this feast. It is there connected with the finding of the sacred fire and receives the name "Purification," which is derived from "Nepthai" (2 Macc. i. 36, ii. 16). In pagan circles December 25 was the festival of the winter solstice, celebrating the renewal of the sun and the re-birth of vegetation. This date was evidently intentionally chosen by Antiochus, since in 1 Macc. i. 54 ff.

there is a deliberate interval of ten days between the setting up of the abomination of desolation and the inauguration of the heathen sacrifices. As we have seen, the re-dedication took place on the same day, and so it came about, with this as with other Jewish festivals, that an old pagan feast was retained and invested with a new meaning. The importance of this point for our purpose lies in the proof it affords that the idea of revival or resurrection was associated with the festival from the first.[1] There was therefore a special appropriateness in the Memorial on this day of the Seven Martyrs with the stress laid on their winning of the resurrection.

The distinctive feature of the ceremonial of *Chanukkah* is, and has been from the first, the kindling of the seven lamps, one being added on each of the seven days of the feast; or, according to the rival ritual of the school of Shammai, the seven were all lit on the first day and one was extinguished on each successive day. In either case it is reasonable to see a reference to the seven martyrs, while the connection of fire with the renewal of the sun at the winter solstice and with resurrection lies on the surface. We remember that in Christian circles in Jerusalem the miracle of the Sacred Fire has in fact been transferred to Easter.

We may therefore distinguish the following features of the Feast of Dedication, though it does

[1] Cf. the letter of 2 Macc. i., where the Feast is regarded as far older than the Maccabean age.

not follow that they were all equally prominent at the same period or in the same circles—

1. It is the feast of the re-dedication of the Temple.

2. It is the feast of its purification, with this as an alternative title.

3. Connected with the re-birth of the sun at the winter solstice and the renewal of vegetation, it is the festival of the sacred fire and resurrection.

4. It is the Memorial Day of Eleazar and the Seven Martyrs, who prepared the way for the recovery of the Temple from the tyrant and proved themselves worthy of the resurrection to eternal life.

It is therefore probable that, in Professor Bacon's phrase, 4 Maccabees is "a Memorial Day address," delivered on the Feast of Dedication.[1] Indications derived from the book itself suggest that it was not a mere literary exercise but a sermon spoken to an actual audience; see especially i. 10, 12, and the use of the second person throughout, *e.g.* iii. 2.

One or two further remarks may be made on this point. It will be seen that the features described above as characterising the Dedication Festival are by no means all equally prominent in 4 Maccabees. The connection with the re-dedication of the Temple is preserved only in the Apollonius incident (ch. iv.), which otherwise has little to do with the main theme

[1] Professor Bacon makes a most interesting suggestion as to the connection between these ideas and the Lazarus ("Eleazar") miracle in the Fourth Gospel, but this lies outside the subject before us.

of the book. But there is no further reference to the purification of the Temple. The writer in fact took little interest in its sacrifices or ceremonial, and above all he clearly had no sympathy with the active exploits of the Maccabees, to which the restoration was really due. As we have seen, there was a serious breach between their descendants and the party of the Law. The writer, though not technically a Pharisee, certainly belonged to the strict sect of Judaism, except in his sympathy with some sides of Hellenic thought. He has accordingly nothing to say in praise of the warriors who had won liberty for his nation ; his interest is all on the side of the Passive Resisters or Quietists. He would have ranged himself with those who refused to fight on the Sabbath (1 Macc. ii. 33 ff.), and he definitely attributes the deliverance of the race to the endurance of the martyrs and not to the resistance of the Maccabees.

The feature of the Feast, therefore, for which he really cares, is that it keeps alive the memory of the Seven and their mother. Starting from this he transforms, as Bacon points out, the idea of purification. This becomes not the ceremonial purification of the Temple by Judas, but the purification of the nation through the merits and sufferings of the martyrs, a fruitful and important theological idea of which more will be said later.

Leading Philosophical and Theological Ideas

1. The avowed theme is the combination of Greek philosophy with Jewish religious beliefs (i. 1 ff.), a combination characteristic of Philo and the Alexandrian school in general.[1] The opening section (i.–iii. 18) is entirely philosophical, and the same ideas are frequently repeated in the pauses of the narrative. The language of Stoicism is freely used—the four virtues, and technical terms such as Reason, the Passions, etc.[2] Eleazar himself is made a philosopher, a point which is not taken over from 2 Maccabees, and is therefore of special significance. The writer feels himself on weaker ground when he comes to the seven youths and their mother, but he is not afraid to assume that they too are philosophers, even though unschooled (vii. 23, viii. 15). In other respects the writer shows his sympathy with the better side of Hellenism, *e. g.* in metaphors from the games (xi. 20, xv. 29, xvii. 12), and in the hardly concealed regret with which he regards the prohibition of painting (xvii. 7).

His creed, however, is Greek philosophy with important modifications. The key-note of the book is seen in the frequently recurring phrase *εὐσεβὴς λογισμός*, which I have translated "God-directed

[1] Note the constant parallelisms with the Alexandrian Book of Wisdom, some of which are pointed out in the notes.

[2] See Townshend's notes and quotations in his edition in Charles's *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. Note also the frequent personification of Justice and Providence.

Reason."[1] No one English phrase quite gives the idea; it is reason in relation to God, enlightened by Him and deliberately directed to the knowing and doing of His will. It is assumed throughout that this will is finally and completely revealed in the Mosaic Law. And the fact that the crucial point is the eating of swine's flesh shows that all parts of that law, whether ceremonial or moral, are regarded of equal importance. Eleazar indeed says this in so many words (v. 20), and here he agrees with the Stoics, though of course they gave to the law a very different content.

We sympathise more readily when a protest is made against the Stoic doctrine that the natural desires or passions are wrong in themselves (ii. 21). This type of dualism or ascetism has always been alien to Judaism, which has clung closely to the fundamental principle of Genesis that all nature, including man's body, comes from God (v. 25 ff.).

Apart from its details the main teaching of the book is of permanent value. Mere unthinking piety or enthusiasm is not enough; it must be guided by sound thinking. On the other hand, reason itself fails and becomes one-sided unless it finds its direction and completion in religion.

2. On the theological side great prominence is given to the belief in *a future life of rewards and punishments*. Something has already been said of the historical conditions which gave rise to this.

[1] Townshend translates "inspired"; others "pious." In some cases (*e.g.* vii. 16 ff.) it has been necessary to adopt the rendering "righteous" in order to keep the play on words.

It is now generally recognised that there are at most only vague hints of any such doctrine in the Old Testament. There another world is not called in to redress the balance of this; the solution of the suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked is not found in any reversal of fate after death. But during the last two centuries B.C., the period covered by the Apocrypha and the Apocalyptic literature, this solution came to be widely adopted. In 4 Maccabees the reward of the martyr is consistently and emphatically placed in the blessed immortality into which he enters. Here the writer follows 2 Maccabees, but with a difference. There the stress is on the resurrection of the body; the martyr will even receive again his mutilated limbs (2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14). But in 4 Maccabees the doctrine is distinctly that of the immortality of the soul.[1] "As though in the fire he were already being transformed into incorruption" (ix. 22). "The sons of Abraham . . . are gathered to the company of their fathers, receiving pure and immortal souls from God" (xviii. 23; cf. also xvi. 13). The view is exactly that found in another Alexandrian book, the Book of Wisdom:

[1] Bacon sees in this direct admission to heaven a special privilege of the martyrs who have part in the first resurrection and do not need to await the final resurrection (*loc. cit.*, p. 270). But though it is true that the gift of immortality is only explicitly promised to martyrs and the fathers, just as punishment is only for the tyrant, nothing being said about the fate of ordinary men, yet there is in fact in 4 Maccabees no hint of any resurrection in the strict sense for any. The book distinctly teaches immortality without the resurrection of the body.

"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them" (Wis. iii. 1). There too this immortal life with God is the reward of suffering bravely borne.

On the other hand, we have the future punishment of the tyrant. The conception of such punishment owed its origin to the feelings aroused by cruelty and oppression; it expressed the ethical claim for justice. In the literature where it first appears it is nearly always in direct connection with some such idea; see Dan. xii. 2, Judith xvi. 17, Enoch lxii. ff., Rev. xiv. 9, etc. So in 4 Maccabees the future doom of Antiochus as the just reward of his cruelty and wickedness recurs as a kind of *leitmotiv* at each successive martyrdom; see *e. g.* ix. 8, x. 11, xii. 12, 19. The contrast with the dying prayers of Christ and Stephen is sufficiently obvious and warns us against the assumption that what may have marked a real ethical development at the time is necessarily a final stage for Christian thought.[1]

It is usual to quote the book as teaching the doctrine of everlasting punishment, but this is at least doubtful. The language used implies long duration, to which no definite end is perhaps seen. The word "æonian," or agelong, occurs several times, and the fact that *πολυχρόνιος*, "of long duration," can be used of the life of the blessed

[1] On the development and significance of the doctrine of future punishment in pre-Christian literature and in the New Testament, see the writer's Essay, "The Bible and Hell," in *Immortality* (Macmillan & Co., 1917).

(xvii. 12) shows that here, as in similar literature, the question of strict everlastingness or eternity had not really been thought out.

3. A further fruitful idea is the doctrine of *vicarious suffering*, which occurs in the same connection in 2 Macc. vii. 33, 37. In 4 Maccabees it meets us at the very beginning (i. 11), and it is deliberately emphasised at each pause in the story (vi. 28 ff., ix. 24, xii. 18, xvii. 20 ff., xviii. 4). In the first passage the deliverance brought by the martyrs might seem to be understood in a merely natural sense, as meaning that their heroic steadfastness broke the will of the tyrant. But it subsequently becomes clear that their sufferings are regarded as working on the mind of God, appeasing His anger and bringing about the purification of the nation. It has already been pointed out that this national purification takes the place of the external purification of the Temple. The death of the martyrs is definitely propitiatory, and becomes a substitute for the death of others; see especially vi. 28 f., xvii. 22.

4. The attitude to *women* is also interesting. This comes out particularly in the closing chapters, the last of which has sometimes been suspected as a later addition to the book. Townshend defends it on the ground that the writer is determined somehow or other to get in his point about the praise of women. While he is certainly right in retaining the section, it is doubtful whether his argument is altogether valid. The point throughout is not the greatness but the weakness of womanhood.

Reason triumphs even in her (xvi. 1, etc.); it might naturally have been expected that it should fail; and the fact that it did not is a tribute to the power of reason rather than to the strength of woman. The closing chapter really supports the common view of the superiority of man. For the mother quotes the teaching of the father throughout (xviii. 10). The story has made it impossible to introduce him directly, but in this rather roundabout way it is made clear that the heroism of the seven sons and of the mother is due to the man's influence. The boast of the mother is that she has confined herself to what were regarded as the essentially feminine duties of preserving her chastity and looking after the home in humility and subjection.

Bearing on the New Testament

It is obvious that on certain points there is an important similarity between the ideas of 4 Maccabees and the teaching of the New Testament. This is specially the case with regard to the life of the blessed after death, the punishment of the wicked, and the conception of vicarious punishment. It is comparatively unimportant whether the book was actually known to the New Testament writers and used by them. The real point, as in all such cases, is that the ideas in question were obviously part of the current religious thought of the first century. Passages such as Mark x. 45, Rom. iii. 25, 1 Tim. ii. 6, are not to be explained merely from

the standpoint of the Old Testament sacrificial system, but must be related to the conception of the value of the sufferings of the righteous found in 4 Maccabees and elsewhere. In the same way we have in St. Luke's version of the interview with the Sadducees as to the Resurrection close parallels to the teaching of our book; cf. Luke xx. 38 with 4 Macc. vii. 19, xv. 3, xvi. 25. It is true that it has been suggested that these latter passages are interpolated under Christian influence, but they are entirely in place as they stand and there is no real evidence of this. In vi. 5 the stress on the name Eleazar ("God is my Help")—"an Eleazar in truth"—may throw light on the use of the name Lazarus, which is only another form of Eleazar, in the parable of Luke xvi. It is the only case where our Lord names any of the characters in His parables, and it may well be significant as giving the ethical touch which we look for, suggesting that Lazarus was not rewarded merely because he had been poor, but because he had put his trust in God. "Abraham's bosom" in the same parable may be compared with 4 Macc. xiii. 17. Again with 4 Macc. xvii. 18, "Whereby they now stand before the throne of God," etc., we may compare Rev. vii. 15, "Therefore are they before the throne of God"; both passages refer specially to the reward of the martyrs.

There are also marked points of contact with Hebrews; in view of the close connection between this Epistle and the Lucan writings it is certainly interesting to find that 4 Maccabees has such close

parallels with both. The roll of faith in Heb. xi. refers clearly to the Seven and their mother, though of course there is nothing which necessarily points beyond 2 Maccabees. The image of the spectators and the athletic contest in xii. 1 is, however, very similar to that in 14 Macc. xvii. 14; the stress on faith is common to both books (cf. 4 Macc. xv. 24, xvi. 22, xvii. 2), the conception in our book being much nearer to that of Hebrews than to the Pauline usage, while "endurance," which is so prominent in 4 Maccabees, is equally important in Heb. x. 36, xii. 1.[1]

Style

Stress has been laid on the excellence of the style, *e.g.* by Torrey in the *Enc. Bib.*, and the language is in fact a favourable specimen of the artificial literary Greek of the period, very different from the rough *Koiné*, or popular language, of most of the New Testament and the Papyri. Again, within the New Testament the nearest parallel is Hebrews. The writer uses a large variety of rare compound words, some of them apparently his own coinage. But beyond this there is little more that can be said in his favour. The scheme of the book is open to the obvious danger of constant repetitions, both in the story and in the comments, and the writer has fallen headlong into the trap. The details of the tortures are not merely gruesome and repulsive to modern ears; they are grossly

[1] The same Greek word is used.

exaggerated and impossible. There is great carelessness in point of detail, as when Apollonius is substituted for Heliodorus and Antiochus is made the son, instead of the brother, of Seleucus Philopator (iv. 4, 15). Nor is there any attempt at an individual characterisation of the various actors. The persecutor, the martyrs, and the bystanders are simply the conventional lay figures which, with the necessary alteration of the setting, would fit any similar situation. The most distinctive feature is really the exposition of the author's own philosophy, an exposition which is ludicrously incongruous in the story. The book is, however, redeemed by its obvious sincerity and by the interest of its leading ideas, when considered in their historical development.

MSS., Versions, Date and Authorship

The book is found in three of the four chief MSS. of the Septuagint, A, ℵ, and V, but not in B. There is an early Syriac version, but no old Latin. It is therefore not in the Vulgate or in our own Apocrypha. At one time the book was attributed to Josephus, and it is found in some editions of his works. Erasmus made a free expanded paraphrase, but it is not known what sources he used for his additions. The text is fairly well preserved, and, though there are numerous variations, they do not in most cases seriously affect the meaning or translation.

The points of contact with Greek philosophy

suggest that it was written in Alexandria. This view is confirmed by the lack of interest in the Temple and its ceremonial (see p. xiii.), and the stress laid on the prohibition of unclean food. This feature at least points to a non-Palestinian origin, since the question was far more serious and vital to Jews living in Gentile cities. The references to the peace enjoyed by the nation lead us to infer that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem, and also, if we are right in placing it in Alexandria, before the outbreak of the persecution of Caligula in A.D. 38. It is certainly later than 2 Maccabees (*c.* 100 B.C.), and may be dated somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era. If it be supposed that the difficulties raised by the worship of the Roman Emperor were already apparent and that the first ominous warnings of Caligula's persecution had appeared on the horizon,[1] the book gains greatly in point. The hearers "have not yet resisted unto blood," but they may at any moment be called on to do so, and the writer's purpose is to fortify them before the day of trial by the example of the heroes of an earlier generation.

As has been already said, the book has sometimes been attributed to Josephus. Eusebius (*H. E.* iii. 10) ascribed it to him under the title "The Supremacy of Reason," and he is followed by Jerome. But the whole style and outlook of the book make this theory impossible, and the author must remain entirely unknown.

The usual title is that found in the MSS. It may

[1] So Townshend and others.

have arisen from the connection with 2 Maccabees. But if it was originally a Homily for the Feast of Dedication, we have a better explanation in the close connection of this feast with the exploits of the Maccabees, though, as we have seen, this latter aspect of the festival is not in fact mentioned in the book (see p. xiii.).

Like all other literature connected with the Maccabees, 4 Maccabees had little influence on later Judaism (see p. ix.); for the exceptions reference may be made to Townshend (p. 657). On the other hand, the seven martyrs were very popular in Christian circles; Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom in their panegyrics on them show definite knowledge of our book; for details, again see Townshend.

Sources

The story is based on the relevant parts of 2 Macc. iii.–vii., especially vi. 18–vii. In iv. 8 Apollonius is substituted for Heliodorus (2 Macc. iii. 13). Speeches are freely put into the mouths of the characters, following the ancient practice, and in these the writer frankly expresses his own philosophical and religious ideas. The account of the tortures and sufferings of the martyrs are expanded throughout in great detail; in 2 Macc. vii. 41 we are simply told that the mother dies last; in 4 Maccabees she is made to commit suicide lest any should touch her body.

It has been suggested that the writer may have

had access to other sources for these additions, *e. g.* to Jason of Cyrene of whom 2 Maccabees is an epitome. But there is neither need nor evidence for any such hypothesis, since the new matter and variations from the earlier account are all easily explained as due to the writer's special purpose and point of view.

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The fullest and most recent edition is that by R. B. Townshend in Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913). English translations may also be found in Cotton, *Five Books of the Maccabees* (1832), Bagster, *Apocrypha, Greek and English* (1882), and Churton, *Uncanonical and Apocryphal Scriptures* (1884). The Greek text is accessible in any edition of the Septuagint, especially in Swete's. Among German editions reference may be made to Grimm, *Handbuch zu den Apocryphen* (1857), Fritzsche, *Libri apocr. V.T.* (1871), and Deissmann in Kautzsch's *Apocr. u. Pseudepigr.* (1899). Literature bearing on special points has already been mentioned.

Words inserted in the translation for the sake of clearness are printed in italics.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MACCABEES

I. 1–12. General Statement of the Subject

I. 1. Since the subject I propose to discuss is most philosophical, namely whether God-directed Reason has complete authority over the passions, I would earnestly counsel you to give serious attention to its philosophy. 2. For the subject is necessary to everyone as a branch of knowledge, and also it includes the praise of the highest of virtues, which is prudence. 3. If then Reason is seen to control

I. 1. The word for Reason is not *Logos*, but *Logismos*, a term already in use among the Stoics. For the tr. "God-directed," see Intr. p. xiv. The adj. so translated was also used more or less technically in Jewish writings to denote the *Chasīdim*, or strictly orthodox party of the Law. The phrase "God-directed Reason" therefore, which occurs constantly throughout the book, is well suited to express its special standpoint in the combination of Jewish orthodoxy with the best of Hellenic philosophy.

2. Again the terms are technical. The qualities named are the four Stoic virtues—prudence (wisdom or right judgement), temperance (or self-control), justice, and courage (cf. verse 6). They occur also in Wis. viii. 7, and constantly in Philo. In v. 23 f. righteousness, or piety, is substituted for prudence; cf. also ii. 23.

"Passions" must be understood in its older sense, including the emotions and affections.

the passions which hinder temperance, that is to say gluttony and lust, 4. it is also clearly shown to be superior to the passions which stand in the way of justice, such as malice, and to those which stand in the way of courage, anger pain and fear. 5. How then, some may ask, if Reason rules the passions, is it not superior to forgetfulness and ignorance? Their attempt at argument is ridiculous. 6. For Reason does not rule its own passions, but those which are opposed to justice, bravery, temperance and right judgement; and it rules these not by way of destroying them but by refusing to yield to them.

7. I might then show you from many different sources how God-directed Reason has full control over the passions; 8. but I may illustrate it far the best from the heroism of those who died for virtue, Eleazar, and the seven brethren and their mother. 9. For all these by despising sufferings even unto death, showed how Reason rules the passions. 10. I might then praise for their virtues the men who at this season died with their mother in the cause of what is noble and good, but I would rather felicitate them on the honours they won. 11. For by their courage and endurance they attracted the

5, 6. These *vv.* seem quite out of place here and may belong to ii. 24.

10. "At this season": the ref. seems to be to the actual day or festival at which the martyrs were commemorated; see Intr. p. x.

11. For the historical refs. and the idea of purification, see Intr. pp. vi ff., xviii. Note the omission of any reference to the exploits of the Maccabees to which the deliverance of the Jews was primarily due.

admiration not only of mankind in general, but even of their torturers, and became the cause of the destruction of the tyranny which oppressed our nation, overcoming the tyrant by their endurance, so that our country was purified by them. 12. But there will presently be an opportunity to speak about this when we have first, according to my custom, stated the general principle; after that I will turn to their story, giving glory to the all-wise God.

I. 13—III. 18. **Reason and the Passions**

13. We enquire then whether Reason has control over the passions. 14. But let us define clearly what Reason really is, and what passion is; how many types of passions there are, and whether Reason controls them all. 15. Reason then is mind choosing with sound judgement the life of wisdom. 16. And wisdom is knowledge of things human and divine, and of their causes. 17. This wisdom is what we are taught by the Law, by which we learn things divine with reverence, and things human for our profit. 18. And of wisdom the types are prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. 19. Prudence is the greatest of all; it is through this in fact that Reason controls the passions. 20. Now of passions the most comprehensive types are two, pleasure and pain; and of these each

17. Verses 13–16 might have been written by a Greek philosopher; Townshend points out that *v.* 16 is almost exactly paralleled in Plut. *Plac. Phil.* i. 1. In *v.* 17, where the Law is definitely the Law of Moses, we pass to the specifically Jewish and religious standpoint.

is concerned with the soul *as well as with the body.* 21. And there are many consequences of the passions in connection both with pleasure and with pain. 22. For before pleasure comes desire; after it joy; 23. and before pain, fear; after it sorrow. 24. And anger is a passion which embraces both pleasure and pain, if we consider what happens when we fall into it. 25. And under pleasure falls also the debased disposition which is the most varied of all the passions. 26. In the soul it is boastful imposture, and covetousness, and vanity, and quarrelsomeness and backbiting; 27. and in the body indiscriminate eating and gluttony and gourmandising in secret. 28. Pleasure and pain being as it were two trees growing from body and soul, there are many offshoots of these passions. 29. Each one of these the master-gardener Reason purges, as he prunes and binds up and irrigates and directs the water in all directions, bringing into cultivation the wild thickets of dispositions and passions. 30. For Reason is guide of the virtues, but supreme master of the passions.

Mark therefore in the first place by the controlling acts of temperance how Reason is supreme lord of the passions. 31. Temperance of course

26. Lists of virtues and sins such as this were characteristic of the Stoics. There are close resemblances between their lists and those found in the New Testament; see Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 320. "Indiscriminate eating" is clearly introduced here in order to prepare the way for the story which follows. For "secret gourmandising," cf. Job. xxxi. 17.

29. These rather elaborate metaphors are characteristic of 4 Macc.; cf. vii. 1; xiii. 6; xv. 25, 31; xvii. 3.

is control of the desires. 32. And of the desires some belong to the soul, some to the body; and Reason is seen to control both. 33. For how is it that when we are tempted to forbidden meats, we turn away from the pleasures they promise? Is it not because Reason is able to control the desires? That is my answer. 34. Therefore when we desire things from the waters, or birds or animals, all kinds of meats forbidden us in the Law, we abstain on account of the control of Reason. 35. For the passions and desires are checked and turned aside by the temperate mind; and all the motions of the body are bridled by Reason.

II. 1. And is it to be wondered at if the desires of the soul for the enjoyment of beauty are frustrated? 2. This is the very reason why we praise Joseph the temperate, because by the power of mind he conquered the desire for pleasure. 3. For though a young man and subject to the promptings of sex, by the power of Reason he brought to nothing the fierce impulse of the passions. 4. And Reason is seen to control the promptings not only of sensual pleasure, but of every kind of desire; 5. for the Law says "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife nor anything that is his." 6. And indeed when the Law orders us not to covet, it may help me to convince you that Reason is able to control the desires just as it does the passions which hinder justice. 7. For when a man is

33. Again we note the stress on the ceremonial offence of eating unclean food, the illustration being chosen in view of what follows; cf. Acts x. 10 ff.

naturally a secret gourmandiser, or a glutton, or a drunkard, how is he taught better unless Reason is clearly lord over the passions? 8. As soon as a man orders his life according to the Law, even if he be fond of money, he does violence to his own disposition, lending money to the poor without interest and cancelling the debt at the seven-year period. 9. Or if a man is miserly he is ruled by the Law through Reason, neither gleaning his fields when reaped, nor picking his vines the second time. And in the case of all other passions too it is possible to see that Reason is superior to them. 10. For the Law is superior even to affection for parents, not allowing the surrender of virtue for their sakes; 11. and it is superior to love of wife, rebuking her for any transgressions; 12. it is higher than love of children, punishing them for wrong-doing; it conquers affection for friends, reproving them for evil. 13. And do not think it a strange thing when Reason is able to overcome

II. 7. See note on i. 17.

8. "The seven-year period." The exact reading and tr. are uncertain, but the ref. is clearly to Deut. xv. 1 ff. It is disputed whether that passage contemplates a remission of debts every year, or a suspension of interest, corresponding to the Sabbatical year of Ex. xxiii. 10, Lev. xxv. Philo and the Mishnah take the former view and so apparently does this passage. It is, however, unique in implying that the law was actually observed; all other references to it show that, as was to be expected, various forms of evasion and contracting out were widely adopted; see Driver, *Int. Crit. Com.* on Deut. xv.

9. See Lev. xix. 9, xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 19 ff.

11. Note the conception that punishment and rebuke are opposed to love, and contrast Prov. iii. 12, etc., where chastening is regarded as the mark of love.

even hatred at the command of the Law, 14. not cutting down the cultivated trees of enemies, saving hostile property from looters, and repairing ruins.

15. And Reason is seen to rule even the more violent passions, ambition, vanity, boastful imposture, pride and backbiting. 16. For all these evil passions the temperate mind repels, as it repels anger too; for it rules over this as well. 17. When Moses was angered against Dathan and Abiram, he did not act angrily towards them, but directed the course of his anger by Reason. 18. For, as I said, the temperate mind is able to show its superiority over the passions, modifying some and crushing others. 19. For why did our wise father Jacob blame Simeon and Levi and their friends for the slaughter of the whole tribe of the Shechemites, which was not according to Reason, saying "Cursed be their anger"? 20. Unless Reason were able to control bursts of anger, he would not have spoken so. 21. For when God made man He implanted in him his passions and dispositions. 22. At the same time He enthroned mind amid the senses as the sacred guide over all, 23. and to this He gave Law; if a man order his life by this,

14. This reference to the mitigation of the horrors of war is not without interest. The cutting down of fruit trees is forbidden in Deut. xx. 19, but it was done in the invasion of Moab at Elisha's instigation (2 Kings iii. 19, 25; cf. 4 Esdras xv. 62). It was widely practised by the Assyrians and Arabs.

19. Gen. xlix. 7. In Judith ix. 2, Jub. xxx., Test. Levi v., vi. the action of Levi and Simeon is approved; see Charles' note on Jub. xxx.

21. The "passions" are God-given; see Intr. p. xv.

he shall reign over a kingdom which is temperate, just, good, and brave.

24. How then, it may be said, if Reason rules the passions, does it not rule forgetfulness and ignorance? III. 1. The implied argument is simply absurd. For we see that Reason is ruler not over its own passions, but over those of the body. 2. For example, none of you can extirpate desire, but Reason can bring it about that you should not be enslaved to desire. 3. None of you can extirpate anger from the soul, but Reason can come to your aid against anger. 4. None of you can extirpate an evil disposition, but Reason can be your ally so that you are not swayed by it. 5. For Reason does not uproot the passions but opposes them.

6. It is possible to show this more clearly by the story of King David's thirst. 7. For fighting the whole day against the Philistines, he had slain many of them with the aid of the soldiers of our country; 8. then when evening came, in a sweat and exhausted, he reached the royal tent round which the whole army of our forefathers was encamped. 9. The rest all took their supper; 10. but the king, having an intense thirst, though he had abundant springs of water, could not satisfy

23. Cf. xiv. 2. The wise man as king was a standing topic of the Stoics; cf. Wis. vi. 20, and Philo.

III. 2. The second person suggests that this was a spoken homily; see Intr. p. xii.

7 ff. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 15 ff. The O.T. account is considerably embellished after the manner of the usual Jewish *Midrash* or commentary.

it from them. 11. But an unreasonable desire for the water that was in the possession of the enemy grew more intense and inflamed him ; it unmanned and consumed him. 12. So when his body-guard chafed at the king's desire, two young men, brave warriors, respecting it, armed themselves fully and taking a pitcher scaled the enemies' ramparts, 13. and hiding themselves from the sentries at the gates they passed through the whole hostile camp in their search. 14. They bravely discovered the spring and drew from it the draught for the king. 15. But he, though consumed with thirst, reasoned that such a draught, counted as equivalent to blood, was a grievous danger to his soul. 16. So setting Reason against desire, he poured out the drink as an offering to God. 17. For the temperate mind can conquer the compulsions of the passions and quench the fires of the desires, 18. and overcome the sufferings of the body, even when extreme, and by the noble virtue of Reason scorn all the tyranny of the passions.

III. 19—IV. 14. **The Attempt of Apollonius on the Temple Treasures**

19. But it is now time for us to set forth the story of self-controlled Reason. 20. For when our fathers, as a result of their devotion to the Law, enjoyed profound peace and prosperity, so that the king of Asia, Seleucus Nicanor, even assigned them funds for the Temple service and recognised their form of government, 21. at that very time a

21. See 2 Macc. iii. 3. The ref. should be to Seleucus IV.

party, bringing in innovations contrary to the general concord, involved themselves in a variety of calamities.

IV. 1. For a certain Simon was in opposition to Onias, a man of irreproachable character, who then held the High-priesthood for life, and being unable to injure him, in spite of slanders of every description, on account of the people, he fled into exile with the intention of betraying his country. 2. So he came to Apollonius, the governor of Syria, Phœnicia, and Cilicia, and said: 3. I am come to you with a desire to serve the king, and inform you that many thousands of private deposits are stored in the treasuries of Jerusalem, which do not belong to the Temple funds but to Seleucus the king. 4. Apollonius, having ascertained the details, praised Simon for his care for the king's interests, and went to Seleucus to inform him of the treasure. 5. Having obtained authority to deal with this matter, he came quickly to our country with the accursed Simon and a very powerful army, 6. saying that he came by the king's command to take possession

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Philopator (187–175 B.C.), not to Nicanor, the founder of the dynasty. V. here reads "son," *i. e.* descendant of Nicanor, but this is probably a correction, the writer being very careless about names.

IV. 1 ff. Cf. the longer account in 2 Macc. iii. There the messenger is Heliodorus, not Apollonius; one angel and two young men appear and chastise the intruder; it is his friends who pray for mercy, not Heliodorus himself, and sacrifices are offered for him and by him. The omission of this last feature is characteristic of 4 Macc., the writer being altogether indifferent to sacrifice and the Temple ritual; see Intr. p. xiii.

of the private deposits of the treasury. 7. Our people were deeply indignant at this announcement and protested, feeling that it was scandalous that those who had entrusted their deposits to the sacred treasury should lose their money, and tried to prevent it in every way they could. 8. Apollonius however made his way to the Temple with threats. 9. The priests in the Temple with women and children besought God to defend His Holy Place which was being desecrated, 10. and when Apollonius with an armed force proceeded to the plunder of the money, there appeared from heaven angels on horses in flashing armour who filled them with great fear and dread. 11. Apollonius fell down half-dead in the Court of the Gentiles, and stretching out his hands to heaven he implored the Hebrews with tears to pray for him and to propitiate the heavenly host. 12. For he acknowledged that he had sinned and deserved even to die, but promised if he were spared to celebrate to all men the blessedness of the sacred place. 13. Onias the High-priest, moved by these words, though otherwise scrupulous, interceded for him

7. For private deposits in the Temple see Jos. *B. J.* I. xiii. 9; VI. v. 2.

10. For the whole scene cf. 3 Macc. ii.

11. "Court of the Gentiles," lit. "The enclosure of the Temple open to all nations." For this Court see Jos. *B. J.* V. v. 2. The familiar phrase "Court of the Gentiles" does not occur in any ancient writer.

13. Cf. 2 Macc. iii. 32. If the tr. given above be correct, the idea must be that Onias' intercession for the offender was not quite in keeping with his general piety and needed some excuse.

lest King Seleucus should think that Apollonius had been overthrown by a human plot instead of by divine justice. 14. So he went his way unexpectedly preserved to inform the king of what had happened to him.

IV. 15–26. **Antiochus Epiphanes and the Jews**

15. But on the death of Seleucus the king he was succeeded by his son Antiochus Epiphanes, an arrogant and terrible ruler. 16. He deposed Onias from the High-priesthood and made Jason his brother High-priest, 17. on his consenting to pay three thousand six hundred and sixty talents yearly in return for the appointment. 18. In this way he set up Jason as High-priest and ruler of the people. 19. Jason changed their manner of life and their constitution in complete defiance of the Law, 20. not only going so far as to set up a gymnasium on the Mount of our fathers, but even abolishing the service of the Temple. 21. Divine Justice in anger at this brought Antiochus himself to war against us. 22. For when he was fighting in Egypt against Ptolemy, he heard that a report had been spread of his death, and that the people of Jerusalem were in transports of joy thereat, and marched at once against them. 23. And having

15. Really brother of Philopator, not son; on the character of Antiochus see Intr. p. vi., and for what follows, cf. 2 Macc. iv.–vi.

16. For Onias and Jason see 2 Macc. iv. 7 ff.

20. For the Gymnasium see 2 Macc. iv. 12. The exact site of the *Akra* (Mount) or citadel is disputed; see *Enc. Bib.* col. 2426 ff.

sacked their city, he decreed the penalty of death on any who were found living according to the Law of their fathers. 24. And since he was in no way able by his decrees to destroy the devotion of the people, but saw all his threats and penalties utterly despised, 25. so that even women for circumcising their children were flung headlong from the rocks with their babes, knowing that this would be their fate, 26. since, I say, his decrees were despised by the populace, he tried himself to compel each one of the nation by tortures to eat unclean food and forswear Judaism.

V.—VII. **Martyrdom of Eleazar**

V. 1. So the tyrant Antiochus, sitting with his counsellors on a certain high place, with his troops standing by under arms, 2. ordered his body-guards to bring up the Hebrews one by one and to compel them to eat swine's flesh and meat offered to idols; 3. those who refused to touch the unclean thing he ordered to be tortured and killed. 4. And when many had been dragged together, the first of the group to be brought near him was a Hebrew by

V. 1. "A certain high place." The scene may be presumed to be Jerusalem, though early Christian tradition placed it at Antioch.

4. For Eleazar see 2 Macc. vi. 18 ff.; he is there stated to have been ninety years old. Similarly in 3 Macc. vi. another Eleazar, also an aged priest, intercedes for the people. There is a natural tendency to represent the martyr and intercessor as a venerable patriarch (see Bacon, *Hibbert Journal*, XV. 2); cf. the aged James, the Lord's brother, Symeon, and Polycarp.

"Known for his skill in philosophy"; so V. Other MSS.

name Eleazar, a priest by birth, a lawyer by training, advanced in years and known to many of the tyrant's friends for his skill in philosophy. 5. Antiochus seeing him said: 6. Before beginning to torture an old man like thee, I would counsel thee to eat of the swine's flesh and save thyself, for I respect thy age and thy grey hairs, though I cannot think thee a philosopher when thou hast had them so long and dost still cling to the religion of the Jews. 7. For why dost thou abominate eating the excellent flesh of this creature when nature has bestowed it upon us? 8. It is foolish not to enjoy pleasures that can be had without reproach, and wrong to turn away from the free gifts of nature. 9. But thou seemest to me to be likely to act still more foolishly if with fantastic ideas about the truth 10. thou dost proceed to defy even me to thine own punishment. Wilt thou not wake from the vain dreams of thy philosophy? 11. Wilt thou scatter the foolish vapourings of thy reasonings and adopt a new frame of mind worthy of thy advanced years, learning the true philosophy of experience? 12. Yield to my charitable counsel and take pity

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have "for his age," which is the reading usually adopted. But V. is almost certainly right. His age has already been mentioned, and though Eleazar is not described as a philosopher in 2 Macc., the point is essential to the argument here and is presupposed in *vv.* 10 ff.

7, 8. The usual Greek argument against what seemed the unreasonable and even impious refusal of the Jews to enjoy all nature's gifts. The writer in these debates is clearly replying to the arguments used by the Gentiles among whom he and his hearers lived.

on thy own grey hairs. 13. For bethink thyself that even if there be any power that watches over this religion of yours, it would pardon thee for any transgression of the Law committed under compulsion.

14. When the tyrant urged him in this way to the eating of flesh forbidden by the Law, Eleazar asked leave to speak. 15. And obtaining permission he began his defence thus: 16. Antiochus, we have agreed to order our life according to the divine Law, and we consider no compulsion to be stronger than our desire to obey that Law. 17. Therefore under no circumstances do we deem it right to transgress it. 18. And indeed even if our Law were, as thou dost suppose, not in very truth divine, but we falsely imagined it to be so, not even then would it be right for us to destroy our reputation for piety. 19. Do not think the eating of unclean flesh a small sin. 20. For it is equally serious to break the Law in small things as in great, 21. since in either case the Law is equally despised. 22. Thou mockest at our philosophy as though under it we were not living in accordance with sound reason. 23. Yet it teaches us temperance so that we control all passions and desires, and it trains us in courage so that we readily

20. That small and great transgressions were equally heinous was a doctrine common to the Stoics (Zeno is quoted as the authority) and to some Rabbinical schools; cf. Ja. ii. 10; Gal. v. 3. The Stoic idea is satirised in Horace, *Sat.* I. iii. 15.

22 ff. These verses are important for the argument of the book, as proving that true philosophy is to be found in the Mosaic Law.

undergo any pain. 24. And it trains us in justice so that with all our various dispositions we act with due balance; it teaches us true religion so that we worship with reverence the true God alone. 25. Therefore we do not eat unclean food; for believing the Law to be given by God, we know that the Creator of the universe feels for us according to nature in giving us the Law. 26. While allowing us to eat things that would be suited to our souls' good, He forbad us to eat what would be contrary to it. 27. But like a true tyrant not only dost thou compel us to transgress the Law, but also to eat, so that thou mayest mock at this abominable defilement. 28. But never shalt thou enjoy this mockery over me, 29. neither will I break the sacred oaths of my fathers with respect to keeping the Law, 30. not even if thou dost cut out my eyes and burn my entrails. 31. I am not so old or so little of a man that my reason is not still young in the cause of true religion. 32. Therefore make ready thy racks and blow the fire more fiercely. 33. My pity for my grey hairs is not such as to cause me to break the Law of my fathers by mine own act. 34. I will not play thee false, O Law my teacher, nor will I shun thee, beloved self-control. 35. I will not put thee to shame, O Reason the true philosopher, nor deny thee, honoured priesthood and science of the Law. 36. Thou shalt defile neither the pure lips of my old age nor the ripe years of a

26. See *Letter of Aristeas* 144 ff. for an elaborate discussion of the symbolical and ethical meaning of the regulations as to clean and unclean foods.

life devoted to the Law. 37. My fathers shall welcome me unsullied, fearing not thy torments even unto death. 38. Thou mayest be tyrant over the ungodly, but thou shalt lord it neither by word nor by deed over the commands of my Reason where religion is at stake.

VI. 1. When Eleazar had made this eloquent answer to the exhortations of the tyrant, the guards who stood by dragged him roughly to the instruments of torture. 2. And first they stripped him of his clothing, the old man who was adorned with the beauty of holiness. 3. Then binding his arms on either side they scourged him with whips, 4. a herald crying from over against him, Obey the commands of the king. 5. But the high-souled and noble man, an Eleazar in very truth, was in no wise moved from his purpose, as though his torments were but a dream. 6. Nay, the old man, lifting his eyes to heaven, suffered his flesh to be torn by the scourges till, bathed in blood and his sides all wounded, 7. he fell to the ground when his body could no longer bear the torture ; yet kept he the power of reason erect and unflinching. 8. With his foot one of the rough guards violently kicked his side to make him rise up. 9. But he bore the pain, despised the violence, endured the torments, 10. and, like a brave athlete receiving punishment, won the victory over his torturers, old man though he was. 11. With his face bathed in sweat and his breath coming hard, his courage won the admiration even of his tormentors themselves,

VI. 5. "An Eleazar in very truth ;" see Intr. p. xx.

12. so, partly in pity for his age, 13. partly in sympathy for one who had been their friend, partly in admiration at his endurance, some of the king's suite approached him and said: 14. Why, O Eleazar, dost thou bring destruction upon thyself in these evils? 15. We will set before thee of the prepared meats and do thou feign to taste of the swine's flesh and save thyself.

16. But Eleazar, as though their counsel added to the cruelty of his tortures, cried out: 17. Let not us, the sons of Abraham, be so evil-minded as to feign a deed which would beshame us. 18. For it would indeed be contrary to reason if, after spending our life till old age in service of the truth, and keeping in accordance with the Law the repute of so doing, we were now to change, 19. and should in our own selves become to the young a pattern of impiety, setting them the example of eating unclean food. 20. Shame were it for us to live on a short space longer, mocked during it of all men for cowardice, 21. and, despised by the tyrant as unmanly, to fail to defend our divine Law unto death. 22. Therefore do ye children of Abraham die nobly for your religion, 23. and ye guards of the tyrant, why do ye delay?

24. Seeing him proudly despising the tortures, and equally unmoved by their pity, they brought him to the fire. 25. Then, burning him with cruelly devised instruments, they cast him beneath it and poured ill-savoured broth into his nostrils.

VI. 15. This suggestion of dissimulation is taken with variations from 2 Macc. vi. 21.

26. But he, now burnt to the bone and at the point of death, lifted up his eyes to God and said: 27. Thou knowest, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I die in fiery torments for thy Law's sake. 28. Be merciful to the people and be content with our punishment on their behalf. 29. Make my blood a purification for them and take my life as a ransom for their life. 30. Saying this the holy man died nobly under his tortures, enduring torments even unto death by the power of Reason for the Law's sake.

31. Avowedly, then, God-directed Reason is master of the passions. 32. For if the passions had been superior to Reason, I should have credited them with the evidence of their superiority. 33. But now that Reason has conquered the passions, we justly ascribe to it the power of ruling them. 34. And it is right that we should admit that the greater strength belongs to Reason, when it shows itself stronger even than external sufferings; 35. for it were ridiculous *to deny it.* And I prove not only that Reason has been stronger than suffering, but also that it is stronger than pleasure and that it refuses to yield to it.

VII. 1. For the Reason of our father Eleazar, like a skilled pilot steering the ship of piety through the sea of the passions, 2. though buffeted by the threats of the tyrant and swept by the

28 f. A strong statement of the doctrine not only of vicarious suffering, but of vicarious punishment. God's anger is to be appeased by what the innocent Eleazar endures. Cf. Intr. p. xviii.

mighty waves of his tortures, 3. in no way suffered the helm of piety to swerve until he entered the haven of victorious death. 4. No city besieged with all manner of cunning devices ever resisted so well as did that Saint, who, with his holy soul swept by the fires of torture and rack, overcame his besiegers in the strength of Reason which was the defence of his piety. 5. For our father Eleazar, with his mind standing firm like a projecting crag, broke the frenzied waves of the passions. 6. O priest worthy of the priesthood, thou didst not defile thy hallowed teeth, nor didst thou pollute with unclean food thy belly which was the seat of piety and purity. 7. O thou whose conduct never broke the music of the Law, thou philosopher of the divine life! 8. Such should those be who are called to serve the Law, defending it with their own blood and noble agony in the face of sufferings even unto death. 9. Thou, O father, didst confirm our devotion to the Law by thy steadfastness unto glory; after speaking in honour of holiness thou didst not bring it to nought; by thy deeds thou didst place the words of philosophy on a sure foundation. 10. O aged hero mightier than torture, veteran fiercer than the flame, great king over the passions, Eleazar *indeed.* 11. For as our father Aaron, armed with the censer, ran through the multitude of his nation and overcame the fiery angel, 12. so Eleazar, the son of Aaron, consumed by the heat of the fire, did not

VII. 11. Cf. xviii. 12; Num. xvi. 46; Wis. xviii. 21 ff.
12. For the ref. to Isaac see note on xiii. 12.

allow his Reason to swerve. 13. And yet, most marvellous of all, though an old man, the sinews of his body unstrung, his muscles relaxed, his nerves worn out, he renewed his youth 14. by the spirit of Reason, and by his Isaac-like Reason brought to nought the many-headed torture. 15. O blessed age, O reverend grey hairs, O life given to the Law, perfected by the faithful seal of death!

16. If then an old man despised tortures unto death on behalf of righteousness, righteous Reason admittedly is able to guide the passions. 17. But it may be that some will say that all men do not rule the passions because all do not have their Reason enlightened. 18. The answer is that those who care for righteousness with their whole heart, these alone can control the passions of the flesh, 19. believing that to God they die not, as our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob die not, but live to God. 20. There is then no contradiction in certain persons appearing to be slaves to their passions owing to the weakness of their Reason. 21. For who that follows philosophy righteously according to the full rule of philosophy, and believes in God, 22. and knows that it is a blessed thing to endure any pain for the sake of virtue, would not control his passions for the sake of righteousness? 23. For the wise and temperate man alone is the brave lord of the passions. 24. Therefore indeed even lads, becoming philoso-

19. Cf. Luke xx. 37 ff., and see Intr. p. xx.
24. Note that the youths too are represented as "philo-

phers by the power of the Reason which is according to righteousness, have overcome yet more cruel torments.

VIII. 1—IX. 9. **Antiochus and the Seven Brethren**

VIII. 1. When in his first trial the tyrant found himself plainly defeated, being unable to compel an old man to eat unclean food, 2. then in fierce anger he ordered others of the young men of the Hebrews to be brought, and, if they would eat the unclean food, to release them when they had done so, but, if they refused, to torture them yet more cruelly. 3. On these orders of the tyrant there were brought up seven brethren with their mother, fair, modest, well-born, and with every charm. 4. The tyrant, seeing them walking as if in a chorus with their mother in the midst, took notice of them and, struck by their comely and noble appearance, smiled on them, and calling them to him said: 5. O youths, with all good will, I marvel at the beauty of each one of you, and honouring greatly such a band of brothers, I not only counsel you to avoid the infection of the madness of the old man who has just been tortured, 6. but I invite you to yield and enjoy my friendship; for as I can punish those who disobey my commands, so may I also do good to those who obey me. 7. Trust my word, and you shall receive positions of importance in my service, if you will deny the ancestral law of your

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sophers" (cf. viii. 15), a feature in keeping with the leading idea of the book; see note, p. xiv.

citizenship; embrace a Greek mode of life; 8. change your habits and take pleasure in your youth. 9. For if you drive me to anger by your disobedience, you will compel me to torture each one of you to death with terrible penalties. 10. Have pity on yourselves, whom even I your foe pity for your youth and comeliness. 11. Will you not realise that if you disobey nothing awaits you but death with torments?

12. With these words he ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward that fear might help to persuade them to eat the unclean food. 13. And when the guards produced wheels and instruments for dislocating joints, racks and cranks and catapults and caldrons and braziers and thumbscrews and iron grips and wedges and branding irons, he spake again and said: 14. Lads, fear, and the Justice which you reverence will pardon you if you break her law under compulsion. 15. But they, hearing his persuasive words and seeing the terrible instruments, not only showed no fear, but even proved their philosophy in opposition to the tyrant, and by their right reason brought low his tyrant's power.

16. And yet, let us consider; if some among them had been cowardly and unmanly, what sort of language would they have used? Would it not have been something like this? 17. Miserable and foolish are we; when the king invites and calls us to receive his benefits, are we not to obey him? 18. Why do we delight ourselves with vain purposes and dare a disobedience which can only

bring death? 19. Shall we not fear, my brothers, the instruments of torment and consider the threats of the tortures and flee this vainglorious and disastrous vaunting? 20. Let us pity our own youth and have compassion on our mother's age; 21. let us lay it to heart that if we disobey we shall die. 22. Even the divine Justice will pardon us if of necessity we fear the king. 23. Why do we banish ourselves from life that is so pleasant, and deprive ourselves of the sweet world? 24. Let us not do violence to necessity, or to our own torment indulge in empty conceits. 25. Not even the Law itself willingly condemns us to death, fearing as we do the instruments of torture. 26. Why does such love of contention inflame us and a fatal boldness attract us, when we might live in peace by obeying the king?

27. But the young men, though on the point of torture, said nothing of all this, nor did it even come into their mind. 28. For they despised the passions and were masters over pain. 29. Therefore as soon as the king ceased counselling them to eat the unclean food, all with one voice together as with one mind, said:

IX. 1. Why dost thou delay, O tyrant? for we are ready to die rather than transgress the commands of our fathers. 2. For we should rightly shame our ancestors if we did not by our obedience to the Law take Moses as our counsellor. 3. O tyrant that counsellest breaking of the Law, do not in thy hatred of us pity us more than ourselves.

IX. 2. Moses; so V. and Syr. Other MSS. "knowledge."

4. For we hold thy pity which bids us save ourselves by a breach of the Law, more cruel than death itself. 5. Thou dost try to terrify us, threatening us with death by torture, as though thou hadst learnt nothing but a short while ago from Eleazar. 6. But if the old men of the Hebrews on behalf of religion have died enduring even tortures, more fittingly will we young ones die, despising the torments of thy compulsion over which our aged teacher triumphed. 7. Make trial then, O tyrant; and if thou takest our lives on behalf of religion, think not that thou dost injure us by thy tortures. 8. We through our patient bearing of suffering shall win the prize of virtue; 9. thou for our cruel murder shalt endure in sufficient measure at the hands of divine justice agelong torment in fire.

IX. 10–25. **Martyrdom of the Eldest**

10. These words added to the king's indignation at their disobedience rage at what he considered their ingratitude. 11. So at his order the scourgers brought forward the eldest, and tearing off his garments bound both his hands and arms with thongs. 12. And when they were wearied of flogging him with the whips and had gained nothing they put him on the wheel. 13. On this the noble youth was racked till his limbs were out of joint. 14. And broken in every limb he burst into denunciations, saying: 15. Thou abominable tyrant,

8. Cf. Wis. ii.–v.

9. "Agelong." The word used is lit. "æonian," which occurs in the N.T. in similar connections; see Intr. p. xvii.

enemy of Heaven's justice, brutal of heart, thou torturest me thus not for murder or impiety, but for defending the divine Law. 16. And when the guards said: Consent to eat, that thou mayest be freed from thy torments, 17. he replied: Your wheel, O hateful minions, is not so strong as to strangle my Reason. Cut my limbs and burn my flesh and twist my joints; 18. I will persuade you through all my torments that the children of the Hebrews alone are unconquerable in virtue's cause. 19. At these words they heaped on more coal and tightening the wheel stretched him still more upon it. 20. And the wheel was besmeared with his blood all round, and the heap of coals was extinguished by the drops from his body, and pieces of flesh were whirled round on the axles of the machine. 21. And though the frame of his body was now in dissolution the heroic youth like a true son of Abraham uttered no groan, 22. but, as though in the fire he was already being transformed into incorruption, he bravely endured the torments, 23. crying: Imitate me, my brothers. Never desert your post by my side, nor forswear our brotherhood in nobility of soul; fight a good and holy fight on behalf of righteousness, 24. through which fight may the mercy of the just

22. "Transformed into incorruption." The word for "transformed" is the same as in Phil. iii. 21. The phrase implies the immortality of the soul, with perhaps something of the nature of a spiritual body given at the moment of death. There is no hint in the book of any doctrine of a resurrection of the body; see Intr. p. xvi.

24. See note on vi. 28, and Intr. p. xviii.

Providence which was with our fathers be won for our nation and take vengeance on the accursed tyrant. 25. With these words the holy youth gave up the ghost.

IX. 26–31. **Death of the Second**

26. And while all were wondering at his endurance, the guards brought up the one who was next in age to him, and fastening on themselves iron hands with sharp claws they bound him to the instruments and the catapult. 27. They asked him before the torture whether he were willing to eat, but hearing his noble resolve, 28. they tore at his sinews with their iron hands and flayed off all his flesh down to his chin, together with the skin of his head, like wild leopards. And he, steadfastly enduring the agony, said: 29. How sweet is every form of death on behalf of the religion of our fathers; and, speaking to the tyrant, 30. O most cruel of tyrants, dost thou not feel that thou art now tortured more than I, seeing the arrogant reasoning of thy tyranny conquered by our endurance for righteousness' sake? 31. For my pain is lightened by the joys which attend virtue, but thou art tortured by the threats which attend wickedness; nor, thou abominable tyrant, shalt thou escape the vengeance of the divine wrath.

X. **The Third and the Fourth**

X. 1. So when he had bravely met his glorious death, the third was brought forward amid many

exhortations from all sides to eat and save himself. 2. But he cried out and said: Know ye not that the same father begat me and my brothers that have died, and the same mother bore us, and in the same beliefs was I nurtured? 3. I do not forswear the noble bond of kinship with my brethren. 4. Therefore, whatever engine of torture ye have, apply it to my body; my soul ye shall never touch, not even if ye would. 5. But they, angered at the boldness of the hero, dislocated his hands and his feet with their dislocating instruments, and wrenching his limbs from their sockets, pulled them asunder, 6. and twisted round his fingers and arms and legs and elbow joints. 7. And being in no way able to choke *his spirit*, they flayed off his skin with the tips of his fingers and stripped off his scalp as the Scythians do and straightway brought him to the wheel. 8. On this they twisted his spine, and he saw his own flesh hanging in shreds, and drops of blood falling from his entrails. 9. On the point of death he said: 10. O most abominable of tyrants, we suffer these things on behalf of the discipline and virtue which we have from God, 11. but thou for thy impiety and cruelty shalt endure torments which none can stop.

12. So when he had died in a manner worthy of his brethren, they dragged up the fourth, saying: 13. Avoid the infection of thy brothers' madness; obey the king and save thyself. 14. But he

X. 7. For Scythian cruelty see 2 Macc. iv. 47; 3 Macc. vii. 5.

replied : Ye have no fire to bring against me which is so hot as to make me a coward. 15. By the blessed death of my brethren, and the eternal destruction of the tyrant, and the glorious life of the righteous, I will not deny my noble brotherhood. 16. Devise thy tortures, O tyrant, that by these too thou mayest learn that I am the brother of those who have already been tortured. 17. Hearing this, the bloodthirsty, murderous and abominable Antiochus ordered his tongue to be cut out. 18. But he said : Even if you take away my organ of speech, God hears the silent. 19. See, my tongue hangs out ; cut it, for thou shalt not thereby silence the voice of my Reason. 20. Gladly for the cause of God do we give our members to be mutilated. 21. But thou shalt speedily be overtaken of God ; for thou cuttest out the tongue that has sung the divine hymns of praise.

XI. The Fifth and Sixth

XI. 1. But when he too had died under the cruelty of the tortures, the fifth sprang forward saying : 2. I do not purpose, O tyrant, to claim exemption from the torture endured for virtue's sake. 3. I come forward of my own accord that by murdering me too thou mayest by yet more misdeeds incur the greater penalty at the hands of the divine Justice. 4. O thou enemy of virtue and of man alike, for what crime dost thou destroy us in this manner ? 5. Dost thou think it evil that we worship the creator of all and live according

to His law of virtue? 6. But this is worthy of honours, not of tortures, 7. if thou didst understand the aspirations of mankind and hadst hope of salvation from God. 8. But now being estranged from God, thou warrest against them that worship Him. 9. As he said this, the guards bound him and dragged him to the catapult, 10. and binding him thereon by the knees and fastening them with iron cramps, they bent his loins back upon the wedge of the wheel, and as he was completely broken back on this like a scorpion, every limb was disjointed. 11. In this way, panting hard and in anguish of body, 12. Good, he cried, in spite of thy will, O tyrant, are the favours thou grantest us, good, since thou enablest us to show by yet more noble sufferings our patient loyalty to the Law.

13. So when he too was dead, the sixth was brought, a mere lad; and when the tyrant asked if he wished to eat and be released, he said: 14. Though in years I am younger than my brothers, yet in understanding am I as old. 15. Being born and brought up for the same end, we should also die in like manner for the same cause. 16. Therefore if it be thy mind to torture those who eat not the unclean meat, torture. 17. When he had said this they brought him to the wheel, 18. and stretching him carefully on it they dislocated the bones of his back and roasted him from beneath; 19. and heating sharp spits in the fire, they ran

XI. 7, 8. V. omits these verses. The tr. "of mankind" adopts the emendation of the gen. for the accus., which is hardly translatable.

them into his back and piercing his side they burnt away his entrails. 20. But he cried in the midst of his tortures: O contest worthy of saints, wherein so many brethren have been summoned to a test of suffering and have not been conquered. 21. For unconquerable, O tyrant, is God-directed knowledge. 22. In the armour of virtue I too shall die with my brethren, 23. adding in myself one strong avenger more against thee, O thou cunning deviser of tortures and enemy of the truly righteous. 24. Six lads, we have brought to nought thy tyrant's power. 25. For when thou canst not sway our Reason or drive us to eat unclean meat, does not this bring thee to nought? 26. Thy fire is cool to us; thy catapults hurt us not; thy violence has no power. 27. For the guards, not of a tyrant but of the divine Law, have been our champions; therefore our Reason remains unconquered.

XII. **The Death of the Youngest**

XII. 1. So when he too had died a blessed death, having been thrown into a caldron, the seventh came up, the youngest of all. 2. The tyrant, although he was greatly embittered by his brethren, pitied him, 3. and seeing him already bound with fetters, sent for him and tried to dissuade him, saying: 4. Thou seest the end of the folly of thy brethren; their disobedience has brought them to death upon the rack. And unless thou obey, thou too shalt be tortured miserably

and perish before thy time. 5. But if thou obey, thou shalt be my friend and advanced to high office in the affairs of the kingdom. 6. And giving this advice, he sent for the mother of the lad, that in sorrow for her loss of so many sons she might urge the survivor to obey and save himself. 7. But when his mother had encouraged him in the Hebrew tongue, as we shall soon tell, 8. he cried: Release me; let me speak to the king and all his friends. 9. Rejoicing at the youth's promise they speedily released him. 10. And running up to the gridirons he said: 11. Ungodly tyrant, impious above all sinners, art thou not ashamed, when thou hast received of God thy good things and thy kingdom, to slay His servants and to torture those who follow after righteousness? 12. Therefore the divine justice shall keep thee in store for a fiercer and agelong fire and torments, which shall not leave thee for all the age. 13. Art thou not ashamed, being human, though with the heart of a beast, to cut out the tongue of men of like feelings with thyself and made of the same elements, and to maltreat and torment them in this way? 14. They have died nobly and have sealed their righteous devotion to God; 15. but thou shalt rue bitterly having slain without cause the champions of virtue. 16. Then when he too was on the point of death, he said: 17. I am no renegade from

XII. 6. The text is in some disorder.

7. Her words are given in xvi. 16 ff., xviii. 6 ff.

12. Again the terms are "æonian" and "æon," which do not imply strict everlastingness; cf. ix. 9, and see Intr. p. xvii.

the testimony borne by my brethren. 18. I call on the God of my fathers that He may show mercy to my nation. 19. Thee He will punish both in the life that now is and after death. 20. With this prayer he cast himself into the braziers and so died.

XIII. 1—XIV. 10. **The Heroism of the Martyrs and the Power of Reason**

XIII. 1. If then the seven brethren despised sufferings even to death, it is manifestly shown that God-directed Reason is supreme lord over the passions. 2. For if they had been the slaves of their passions and had eaten the unclean food, we should have said that they had been conquered by them. 3. But as it is it was not so; but by the Reason which is commended in the sight of God they overcame the passions. 4. And we can see the superiority of the understanding, for they won the victory over both passion and sufferings. 5. How then can we refuse to admit right reason's mastery over passion in these men who shrank not from the agonies of the fire? 6. For as towers defending the mouth of harbours break the fury of the waves and make the haven calm for those who sail in, 7. so the right reason of the young heroes, like seven towers, protected the harbour of righteousness and overcame the unruly raging of the passions. 8. For as a holy choir of

20. The contrast between this and similar expressions in the book, and the dying prayers of Our Lord and Stephen is significant.

righteousness, they cheered one another saying: 9. Brothers that we are, let us die like brothers for the Law; let us imitate the three Youths of Assyria who despised the like ordeal of the furnace. 10. Let us not shrink when called to the proof of our righteousness. 11. And one cried: Brother, be of good cheer; and another: Bear it nobly; 12. and a third, calling to mind the past, said: Remember whence ye come and at whose hand Isaac endured to be offered up for righteousness' sake. 13. And one and all together, looking on one another brightly and right full of courage, said: Let us with our whole heart consecrate ourselves to God who giveth our souls and let us lend our bodies to the defence of the Law. 14. Let us not fear him who thinketh he killeth. 15. For a great trial and danger to the soul is laid up in eternal torment for those who transgress the ordinance of God. 16. Let us then arm ourselves with the power to conquer the passions which comes from the divine Reason. 17. When we have so suffered, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will receive us and all the Fathers will praise us. 18. And to each one of the brethren as they were dragged away the survivors said: Shame us not,

XIII. 12. Constant stress is laid in this book on the heroism of Isaac; cf. vii. 12, xvi. 20, xviii. 11. The narrative of Gen. xxii. is elsewhere usually applied to illustrate the faith and obedience of Abraham, as in xv. 28, xvii. 6; cf. Wis. x. 5.

13. Again the stress is on the immortality of the soul; the body can be ignored.

14. Cf. Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 4.

17. Cf. Matt. xxii. 32 and parallels; Luke xiii. 28, xvi. 22.

brother; be not false to those who have gone before.

19. Now ye are not ignorant of the charm of brotherhood which the divine and all-wise Providence has imparted through their fathers to those whom they beget, implanting it in them even in their mother's womb; 20. wherein brothers dwell for the same space of time and are formed for the same period and are nourished from the same blood and brought to maturity from the same life; 21. they are brought to birth at the same interval and drink the milk from the same breasts, from which their souls are nursed in brotherly love in the same embraces, 22. and they grow more and more through their common nurture and daily companionship and general training and our discipline in the Law of God. 23. Brotherly love and sympathy being thus strong, the seven brethren realised their union with one another in yet deeper sympathy. 24. For trained in the same Law and practising the same virtues and brought up in a life of righteousness, they loved one another yet more. 25. For their rivalry in all goodness strengthened their mutual union, 26. making their brotherly love more fervent by the bond of religion. 27. But though nature and companionship and their habits of virtue increased the charms of their brotherhood, yet for the sake of religion the survivors endured to see their brethren outraged and tortured to death. XIV. 1. Nay, they even urged them on to face the agony so as not only to despise the suffering

20. Cf. xvi. 7; Wis. vii. 2.

but also to overcome the passion of brotherly affection.

2. O powers of reason, more kingly than kings, freer than the free, 3. O holy and harmonious concord of the seven brethren in the cause of righteousness! 4. No one of the seven youths played the coward or shrank from death; 5. all, as if running the way to immortal life, hastened to death by torture. 6. For as hands and feet move in harmony with the promptings of the soul, so those holy youths, as though moved by the immortal spirit of righteousness, went in harmony to death for her sake. 7. O all-hallowed sevenfold band of brothers in harmony! For as the seven days of the creation of the world round the *sacred* number seven, 8. thus the youths in chorus circled round righteousness, making of no account the fear of torment. 9. Even now as we hear the story of their suffering we shudder, but they not only saw, they not only heard the utterance of the instant threat, but they felt it all and stood firm, and that under the agonies of fire; 10. and what can be more terrible than these? For the power of fire which is sharp and keen quickly destroyed their bodies.

XIV. 2. See on ii. 22.

7, 8. The tr. represents a slightly emended text, following Deissmann. The comparison is based on the sacredness and mystic meaning of the number seven, which may have been originally derived from astrology.

9. This verse seems to imply that the hearers are not themselves liable to torture; see Intr. p. xxiii.

XIV. 11.—XVII. 6. **Reason stronger than a Mother's Love**

11. And think it not strange that with those men Reason triumphed under torture, when the mind even of a woman despised sufferings still more manifold. 12. For the mother of the seven bore the tortures inflicted upon each one of her sons. 13. Consider how manifold are the yearnings of maternal affection, drawing as it does all things to the sympathy of love; 14. since even irrational animals have the same sympathy and affection for their offspring as have men. 15. For among birds those that nest in the roofs of houses protect their young; 16. and those that build and hatch their young on the mountain crags and in clefts of rocks and holes and tops of trees, drive away the intruder, 17. and even when they cannot, they flutter round their nestlings in the grief of love, calling to them with their own cries, and helping them in whatever way they can. 18. And what need is there to show the love of offspring in the case of other animals? 19. For bees too at the season of making the honey drive off any who approach, and with their sting as with a sword stab those who come near their brood, defending them to the death. 20. But the mother of the youths with a soul like Abraham was not moved from her purpose by her natural feeling for her children.

18. "Other": MSS. have "irrational," which is a repetition of *v.* 14; the change implied is very slight.

20. The ref. is once more to the sacrifice of Isaac.

XV. 1. O Reason of the sons, lord over the passions! O religion, dearer to the mother than her sons! 2. The mother, when two things were set before her, religion and the preservation of her sons for a season according to the promise of the tyrant, 3. loved rather religion that preserves to eternal life according to the will of God. 4. How can I set forth the passionate love of parents for their children? We stamp a marvellous likeness of soul and form on the tender mould of the child, especially because mothers are in closer sympathy with their offspring than fathers. 5. For mothers are of soft soul, and the more children they bear, the more does their love abound. 6. But of all mothers the mother of the seven abounded in love for her sons, since by seven child-bearings she nourished her devotion for them, 7. and by her many pangs for each one was compelled to have the keener sympathy for them; 8. yet in her fear of God she rejected the present safety of her children. 9. Nay, on account of her sons' very nobility of character and their ready obedience to the Law, her affection for them was all the greater. 10. For they were just and temperate and brave and high-souled and lovers of each other and of their mother with such devotion that in keeping the ordinances of the Law they obeyed her even unto death. 11. Yet although there was so much in her maternal affection to tempt the mother to sympathise with them, in the case of no one of them were their manifold tortures able to bend her reason. 12. Nay, the mother actually

encouraged each severally and all together to die for their religion. 13. O sacred natural instincts and love of parents and yearning towards offspring and wages of parenthood, and unconquerable passions of mothers! 14. The mother, seeing each one tortured and burnt, swerved not for her religion's sake. 15. She saw the flesh of her sons melting in the heat, their toes and fingers scattered on the ground, and the flesh of their faces round about their cheek-bones hanging down like masks. 16. O mother who didst now know more bitter sufferings than in their birth-pangs! 17. O thou who alone didst bring forth perfect godliness! 18. Thy first-born breathing out his spirit did not alter thy resolution, nor the second piteously looking to thee in his tortures, nor the third as he died. 19. Nor didst thou weep when thou sawest the eyes of each one looking boldly in his torments on the same cruel fate, or when thou sawest in their nostrils the foreboding of death. 20. Thou didst behold the flesh of one son cut off after the flesh of another, hand after hand severed, head after head flayed, corpse falling upon corpse, and the place crowded with spectators on account of the tortures of thy children; yet thou didst shed no tear. 21. Not the voices of sirens or the song of swans delighting the ear do so melt the hearer, as did the voices of the sons crying to their mother from the torments. 22. How many, how great were then the tortures of the mother, as her children were

XV. 13. The text is uncertain but the general sense is clear.

tortured by rack and fire. 23. But God-directed Reason in the midst of her sufferings gave her a man's heart and nerved her to hold of no account the immediate claims of affection. 24. And though she saw the destruction of seven sons and the manifold variety of their tortures, the noble mother bad them farewell and sent them forth in faith in God. 25. For in the council chamber of her mind, as it were, she beheld cunning counsellors, *the claims of* nature and motherhood and love for her children, and *the horrors of* their tortures; 26. and she, the mother, held two votes for her sons, one for death and one for life; 27. yet she chose not that which brought life for her sons for a short season, 28. but as a true daughter of Abraham called to mind his God-fearing courage.

29. O mother of the race, champion of the Law, defender of religion, winner of the prize in the struggle with compassion! 30. O braver than men in endurance, and more heroic than heroes in what thou hast borne! 31. For as the ark of Noah carrying the world on the world-whelming deluge, withstood the mighty waves, 32. so thou, the guardian of the Law, buffeted from all sides in the raging storm of the passions, and hard beat by the sufferings of thy sons as by mighty blasts, didst nobly bear the tempests which assailed religion.

23. "Man's heart": note the implication that a woman would not naturally be so brave as a man; see Intr. p. xviii.
28. Again the death of Isaac; see note on xiii. 12.
29. Note the metaphor from the games; cf. xi. 20, xvii. 12.
31. For the ark as bearing the hope of the world cf. Wis. xiv. 6.

XVI. 1. If then a woman, and that an old one and the mother of seven sons, endured to see her children tortured to death, it is clear that God-directed Reason is full lord of the passions. 2. I have shown how not only did men conquer the passions, but how even a woman despised the fiercest torment. 3. Not so fierce were the lions round Daniel, not so hot burned the fiery furnace of Misael, as were the natural instincts of affection which consumed her as she saw the tortures of her own sons. 4. But by the Reason of godliness did the mother quench all these many and great passions. 5. For we may take into account that if the woman had been weak of spirit, being a mother, she would have bewailed over them, and it may be would have spoken thus: 6. Ah, hapless one that I am, thrice wretched and more, who have borne seven sons and am the mother of none! 7. In vain was I seven times with child, to no purpose was the ten months' burden borne seven times, fruitlessly did I nurse and to my sorrow did I give suck. 8. In vain did I endure for you, my sons, my many pangs, and the still more anxious cares of your upbringing. 9. Alas for my sons, some unwed and some wedded and childless, I shall not see your children, nor shall I have the joy of being called by the name of grandparent. 10. I that had many and beautiful children am bereft and desolate in my woe. 11. Nor when I die shall I have any of my sons to bury me.

But the holy and godfearing mother lamented none of them with any such lamentation, 12. nor

did she try to persuade any of them to escape death or grieve over them as though they perished. 13. But as though her mind were of adamant and she were bringing forth once more the company of her sons to immortal life, she rather encouraged them by her prayers to die for their religion. 14. O mother, true soldier of God in the cause of religion, though old and a woman, thou didst defeat even the tyrant by thy endurance, and both in deed and in word wast found stronger than a man. 15. For when thou hadst been seized with thy sons, thou didst stand and see Eleazar tortured, and didst speak to them in the Hebrew tongue, saying: 16. My sons, noble is the contest; called thereto to bear testimony for your nation, strive zealously for the Law of your fathers. 17. Shame were it that this old man should endure sufferings for the sake of religion, but that you that are young should shrink from torture. 18. Remember that to serve God have ye come into the world and enjoyed life; 19. therefore ought ye also to bear any pain for God's sake. 20. To serve Him did Abraham our father make haste to sacrifice Isaac his son who was to be the father of our nation, and Isaac shrank not when he saw his father's hand descending with the knife upon him. 21. Daniel the righteous was thrown to the lions; Ananias, Azarias, and Misael were cast violently into the furnace of fires and

XVI. 20. See note on xiii. 12.

21. Note the stress on faith in the sense of seeing the invisible and trusting the promises of God (cf. Heb. xi.); also the refs. to Daniel which are common in the lit. of this period; cf. xvi. 3, xviii. 13; 1 Macc. ii. 60; 3 Macc. vi. 7.

endured for the sake of God. 22. Do ye then have the same faith towards God and be not troubled; 23. for it were against Reason that having learnt godliness ye should not withstand suffering.

24. With these words the mother of the seven encouraged each one of her sons and bade them die rather than transgress the ordinance of God; 25. for they knew well that those who die for God live unto God, as do Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the patriarchs.

XVII. 1. And some of the guards declared that when she was about to be seized and put to death, she cast herself on the pyre in order that no one should touch her body. 2. O mother who with thy seven sons didst break the tyrant's violence and didst bring to nought his evil devices and didst show the grandeur of faith! 3. For thou wast grandly set as it were a roof upon thy sons as pillars and didst bear unshaken the earthquake of the tortures. 4 Be of courage then, mother of the holy soul, having the hope of thy endurance firmly set on God. 5. Not so majestic stands the moon in heaven amid the stars, as thou, lighting the path of thy seven starlike sons to godliness, dost stand in honour with God and art set in heaven with them. 6. For thou didst bear thy children from Abraham our father.

25. See note on vii. 19.

XVII. 1. The mother's suicide is not mentioned in 2 Macc. vii. 41, though the similar case of Razis is narrated with approval in xiv. 37 ff.; cf. too the death of Saul.

6. "Father" is the reading of ℵ, V. Other MSS. have *paidos*, which might perhaps be trd. "the son of Abraham"

XVII. 7—XVIII. 6. The Results of the Martyrs' Heroism

7. And if it were lawful for us to paint, as in a picture, the story of thy godliness, would not they who beheld shudder at the sight of the mother of seven sons enduring tortures unto death for the sake of godliness? 8. For it were fitting on their tomb itself to inscribe even these words speaking as a memorial to our nation:

9. Here lie an aged priest, an aged woman, and her seven sons,
Through the violence of a tyrant who desired to destroy the polity of the Hebrew race;
10. They vindicated our nation, looking unto God,
And enduring torments even unto death.

11. For truly holy was the contest that was waged by them. 12. For virtue proved them then by endurance; the prize was victory in incorrup-

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(another ref. to Isaac), or more probably "Abraham the servant," the term being that used in Isaiah, Acts, etc., for the Servant of the Lord.

7. "As in a picture": the reading is uncertain. The second commandment was interpreted as forbidding all forms of pictorial art. The writer in this remark shows his sympathy with this side of Hellenic culture.

8. Cf. the monument to the Maccabees erected by Simon at Modin (1 Macc. xiii. 27 ff.). Is it possible that the writer, who consistently ignores the Maccabees, intends this to be a rival (see Intr. p. ix.)?

12. "Length of days": the word means simply "lasting for a long time," not necessarily everlasting. It is significant that this can be used of the life of the blessed, and the fact that it is so used warns us against taking the epithets

tion in life of length of days. 13. Eleazar was first in the contest, and the mother played her part, and the brothers contested too; 14. and the tyrant was their opponent, and the world and the society of mankind were the spectators; 15. and religion carried the day, crowning her athletes. 16. Who did not marvel at the athletes of the true Law? Who were not amazed at them? 17. The tyrant himself and his whole council wondered at their endurance, 18. whereby they now stand before the throne of God and live the life of the blessed. 19. For Moses saith, All thy sanctified ones are beneath thy hands. 20. These then having sanctified themselves in the cause of God are honoured not only with this honour, but also in that for their sakes our foes did not overcome our people, 21, and the tyrant was chastised and our land was purified. 22. They became as it were a ransom for our nation's sin, and through the blood of these righteous ones and their propitiating death, the divine Providence preserved Israel which before was evil entreated. 23. For when the tyrant Antiochus saw the courage of their virtue and their endurance under torments, he held up their endurance to his soldiers as an example; 24. and

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applied to the punishment of the wicked too strictly as implying everlastingness. The fact is that the question of eternity had not really been thought out.

14 f. For the whole metaphor cf. Heb. xii. 1 f. For the crown, the prize in the games, see Wis. iv. 2; 1 Cor. ix. 25, etc.; it is frequent in Philo and Josephus.

18. Cf. Rev. vii. 15.

19. From Deut. xxxiii. 3.

22. See Intr. p. xviii.

making them noble and brave for battle and for siege, he overcame and made havoc of all his foes.

XVIII. 1. O sons of Israel, born of the seed of Abraham, obey this Law, and in all things follow godliness, 2. knowing that God-directed Reason is lord over the passions and over pains not only from within but from without. 3. Wherefore they, giving up their bodies to suffering for the sake of religion, were not only admired by men but also obtained a divine inheritance. 4. And through them our nation had peace, and renewing the observance of the Law in our country drave out our foes. 5. And the tyrant Antiochus was both punished on earth and after death he is now chastised. For when he could in no possible way compel the inhabitants of Jerusalem to change

24. The ref. to Antiochus' successes is somewhat surprising; probably they were so well known that he could not be represented as punished immediately (xviii. 5). The edge of the difficulty is ingeniously turned by attributing his victories to the infectious heroism of the martyrs. Erasmus in his paraphrase goes still further and represents Antiochus as levying an army of Hebrew soldiers.

XVIII. 4. "Through them" The active exploits of the Maccabees are again entirely ignored, and the whole success is attributed to the passive resistance of the martyrs, a somewhat bold perversion of history; cf. i. 11, and see Intr. p. ix.

5. For Antiochus in Persia, his illness and death, see 1 Macc. vi. 1–18. He is there represented as seeing in his sufferings a just punishment for his cruelty at Jerusalem. In 2 Macc. ix. there are further details of his sickness; he is tormented by a loathsome disease of the bowels, after the manner of Herod Agrippa in Acts xii., and tries to avert his punishment by a death-bed repentance, which is obviously insincere.

their nationality and to depart from the customs of their fathers, 6. he left Jerusalem and marched against the Persians.

XVIII. 7–19. **The Mother quotes the Father's Teaching**

And the mother of the seven children said this too to her sons, righteous woman that she was: 7. I was a pure maiden and left not my father's house, and I kept guard over the rib which became woman's body. 8. No seducer of the desert or ravisher of the field corrupted me, nor did the seducing serpent of deceit defile the purity of my maidenhood, but I lived with my husband all the

7. For this section see Intr. p. xviii. It is based on the Jewish view of woman; her business is to practise the virtues of the home and "to learn with all subjection" (1 Tim. ii. 11). The teaching on which the heroism of the seven sons is based has come not from her, but from her husband, and the object of the paragraph is to introduce him in this indirect manner.

"The rib": the ref. is of course to Gen. ii. 22. Woman's body is in a special sense given her by God, and she must keep it in chastity. For the general idea cf. 1 Thess. iv. 4.

8. This verse embodies the well-known Jewish belief that women are in danger of seduction by evil spirits (Gen. vi.; Jub. iv., v.; Enoch vi. ff.; Test. Reuben v. 6). The descendants of the first union, the giants of Nephilim, became demons who corrupt mankind (Jub. vii. 27). For their seduction of women see Enoch xv. The same idea probably lies behind 1 Cor. xi. 10 (see Tert. *De Virg. Vel.* vii., xvii., and cf. the story in Jos. *Ant.* XVIII. iii. 4 of seduction by a man who pretended to be the god Anubis). Similarly the Rabbis sometimes held that Eve's fall was due to lust on the part of Satan (Oesterley and Box, *Religion of the Synagogue*, p. 240). Ideas of the same kind as to the possibility of intercourse between women and evil spirits are found in folklore all over the world.

days of my maturity. 9. And when these my sons were grown up, their father died. Happy was he; he found the blessedness of children and never knew the pangs of losing them. 10. He taught you while he was yet with you the Law and the Prophets. 11. He read to us of Abel slain by Cain, and Isaac who became a sacrifice, and Joseph kept in bonds; 12. he spoke to us of the zeal of Phinehas, and told you the story of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael in the fire; 13. he glorified Daniel in the den of lions and blessed him, 14 and reminded you of the scripture of Isaiah that says: Even if thou passest through the fire, the flame shall not burn thee. 15. He sang to us of the Psalmist David who says: Many are the troubles of the righteous. 16. He read to us the Proverbs of Solomon: He is a tree of life to all them that do his will. 17. He affirmed the words of Ezekiel: Shall these dry bones live? 18. Nay, he forgat

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That the desert is the special home of demons is a common idea in the O.T. and elsewhere, *e.g.* Lev. xvi.; Isa. xiii. 21, xxxiv. 14. The remarkable point about this verse is that it should occur in so philosophical a writer; it is a curious testimony to the widespread influence of the modes of thought found in the Apocalyptic books.

10. "The Law and the Prophets": the usual division of the O.T., the poetical books being included under the Prophets. For the duty of the father to teach cf. Deut. iv. 9, vi. 7, xi. 19.

11. All these examples of heroism, except Abel, have already occurred in the book.

14. Isa. xliii. 2.

15. Ps. xxxiv. 19.

16. Prov. iii. 18, "A tree of life to those that lay hold upon her" (*i.e.* Wisdom).

17. Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

not the song which Moses taught which teaches: I will slay and will make alive. 19. This is your life and the blessedness of your days.

XVIII. 20–24. **Conclusion**

20. O cruel day and yet not cruel, when the cruel tyrant of the Greeks set the blazing fire in his barbarous braziers, and in fiercely boiling anger brought to the catapult and again to his tortures the seven sons of the daughter of Abraham, 21. and blinded their eyes and cut out their tongues and slew them with manifold torments. 22. Wherefore the divine Justice pursued and shall pursue the accursed wretch. 23. But the sons of Abraham, together with their mother who won the crown, are gathered to the company of their fathers, receiving pure and immortal souls from God, 24. to Whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen.

18 f. Deut. xxxii. 39 (Moses' Song) and xxx. 20, "blessedness" being substituted for "length," which S reads here.

22. The doom of the tyrant and the blessed future of the martyrs are once more emphasised. For *v.* 23 see note on ix. 22. The "souls" are clearly the immortal souls, or spiritual bodies, received at death. There is no reference, as in Wis. viii. 19, to a good soul allotted at birth.

24. A concluding doxology is common in Jewish religious writings (*e.g.* the books of the Psalms, 3 Macc. vii. 23; Sir. li. 30; Tob. xiv. 15; Pr. Man. 15), and was taken over into Christian literature.

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